

Vale
Ian Hamilton McCowan

23/5/1926 – 26/8/2018

To try and include a long life filled with achievements and adventures in such a short space is almost impossible, however;

Ian Hamilton McCowan, better known as Poppy, Uncle Ian or Mr McCowan was born in Casino on the 23rd May 1926 to Archibald Colin McCowan and Winifred Blanche. Dad had a younger brother Doug, who was born in 1928. Dad always said that he and Doug had a wonderful life as kids, particularly growing up at Byron Bay where Dad excelled in surf lifesaving, at one stage being the North Coast Belt champion. He considered Byron Bay as his haunt and was very surprised when he visited there two years ago to find that only one of his mates were still around. He always told of the time he went to Sydney by train to compete in the Australian Surf Life saving championships at Bondi and during his race encountered a floating piece of poop, which made him swim faster.

Dad completed his Intermediate Certificate at Mullumbimby High School as Dux of school in 1942 and left school to work during the depression. Towards the end of WW11, when he turned 18 dad joined the airforce as an aircraft technician. He wanted to be a pilot, but the discovery that he was colour blind stopped that ambition. Following the war, dad went back to school at Lismore High School to complete his leaving certificate as part of the repatriation initiative and he was inspired to become a teacher. Following his time at Lismore High School, he completed his teacher training at Armidale Teachers College in 1949, training as a general Primary and High School in maths, science and agriculture. He also completed his Bachelor of Arts degree by external studies in 1965.

Dad was teaching at Nimbin Central School when in 1951 he was asked to take up a position on Norfolk Island to replace a teacher who was killed in a car

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1.34ACRES RURAL TRANQUIL SETTING

Ian Hamilton McCowan - continued

accident. He often recounted that when he first arrived he was taken to a progressive barn dance in which he had his fair share of flirting and dancing with the mature young women, only to find them sitting in his classroom the next day. He also told us that one of his pupils, Brenda Randall (Bates) commented why did they send over such an old teacher (he was 24). Dad started the house system, initially with two house, Nepean and Phillip.

Dad met mum, a young dental nurse named Margaret (Prim) Lecren firstly at the Bounty Ball and then when she was working at the school and on the 28th January, 1952 they were married at the Chapel. In 1953, David was born and later that year Mum and Dad moved back to Australia where he taught in a variety of towns including Carrawarna, Brierfield, Stratheden, Tweed Heads and Gunnedah. During this time three more children were born, Bruce (Paw Paw) in 1957 at Casino, Lyn in 1958 at Murwillumbah and Leon (Bookie) in 1961.

In 1968, the family returned to Norfolk Island where Dad was appointed as the Deputy Principal and in 1972 he was appointed as Principal of the Norfolk Island Central School, a position he held until the end of 1977. In 1972, Dad, with Faye Battaille introduced Norfolk Language teaching into the school curriculum.

In 1978, Dad was appointed as Principal of Daceyville Primary School and following that Carlton Primary School in 1983. He retired from teaching in 1986 and together with mum, Goofy and Kath and Fred Royal built Seaworld Restaurant. He also worked for 7 years at the rubbish tip, 4 years as a petrol transfer technician at Paw Paws Pump Shed and lastly as a museum attendant at Kingston. He pointed out that with his increasing age his places of work have been getting closer to the cemetery.

Over his life there are a huge number of amusing and not so anecdotes that I am sure many of you here today can relate to. He had a wide group of cronies and stories abound of Dads adventures with the likes of Goofy, Karl Schmitz, Huggy, Smudge, Garth and Robbie Chapman to name a few. Everyone remembers Karl stirring Dads Frigate with his hoey hoey finger, or the time at the Hotel Norfolk where Dad and Smudge were playing bump the belly and Smudge stepped aside to see Dad plow through a large group of tourists and end up sprawled on the bar. He ended up spending the rest of the night apologising to all and sundry. We can all still remember the time he went on what he thought would be a great adventure sailing on a small yacht from Norfolk to Queensland only to find out that the owner was a complete reincarnation of Captain Bligh, no radar, radio or navigation aids, and unable to cook to have a hot meal.

When a group of fellows decided to form a new league team the Golds because the numbers justified another team, Dad was asked to be involved. He thought they were asking him to be on the committee in some capacity but no, they wanted him to play and dad ended up being the oldest rugby league player on Norfolk in his mid 40's.

Dad was heavily involved in the community, being a very long term member of the Lions Club, at one time being President, President of the Museum Trust, Probus, Bowling Club and Norfolk Island Central School.

Dad is survived by his 4 children, David, Bruce, Lyn and Bookie, 11 grandchildren, Tarn, Natalie, Keeley, Michael, Johnathon, Jake, Kaitlyn, Mathew, Jayden, Jack, and Flynn, with Mitchell passing away in 1995, the same year as Mum. There are 6 great grandchildren, Marley, Heva, Hunni, Nate, Mahina and Nixon. He loved all of his family unreservedly and was a fierce defender of each and every one of us and lo and behold anyone that criticised any of us. This included his nieces and nephews and was often heard to discuss with Sarlu who unfortunately cannot be here today that it was time to "get orn et". Wayne and Ruth Mendham would also have liked to have been here but were unable to attend. A huge thanks must go to Lyn who has been Dads carer for the past few years and looked after him continually. He will be sorely missed by all on Norfolk and Australia who knew him. Rest in Peace Dad.

David McCowan

'Poppy'

For those of you who don't know me, I'm Natalie - Lyn's daughter, and Ian's granddaughter. I would like to represent Ian's grandchildren and great grandchildren today - because I feel like this gentle and humble man deserves this moment in the spotlight. Especially, because Poppy truly shone as a grandfather and great grandfather.

Ten years ago, I wrote an article about Poppy for the Norfolk Online Newsletter, and I began to understand the incredible life he had lead. This interview was also the catalyst for Poppy to write his memoirs. Or at least, start a decade of talking about writing his memoirs! Poppy never got around to it, and so I decided that I would share some of our favourite memories of Poppy today, in the hope that they will live on in more hearts than our own.

Poppy didn't believe in the afterlife. I believe there were times when he wanted to, however his pragmatic mind would always win out. Some may see this as sad, however in Poppy's case, it defined him as a man who lived for this life. As far as he knew, and had proof of, this life was all you had, and you must make a bloody good go of it, and leave it better for future generations. This belief drove his passion for education, and it made him fiercely loyal towards those he loved. I have been asking the other grandchildren and great grandchildren how they would describe our Poppy, and the words that kept coming up, were Loyal, Loving, Fair, Generous, Inspiring and Fun. I've decided to use these words to tie all the memories together. I'll begin with Loyal.

Poppy was our biggest fan. He was at every plane to greet us home, and at every plane to see us leave. He was involved in all our great milestones from births to weddings to graduations to loss of baby teeth, and

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'Poppy' - continued

he never once wavered from his staunch support of our endeavours. He was very forward thinking for his time, and never once made me feel like my gender defined me. He taught me that I can do anything. He was also a bit of a love guru our Poppy. Just ask Keelz, who got through a messy love triangle when she was 7 years of age, thanks to Poppy's advice on loyalty and self worth!

Poppy was incredibly loving. In old photos of us all as children, Poppy would be captured as watching us with an adoring smile on his face. As a child he was a great babysitter to us all, in fact, he had a great trick - where he would fall asleep, and us kids would be on our best behaviour to stay quiet and not wake him up! Every year, Poppy would buy a new wall calendar, and would meticulously transfer all the birthdays of children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces and nephews - and he would make sure that we all felt loved and special on our birthdays and Christmas, with a personalised card, which at times had a bit of money in it. Which brings me to one of Poppy's next wonderful qualities - fairness.

You'll never meet a man who was more fair than Pop. It tortured him to think that any of us grandkids would feel like we had missed out! He simply had no favourites, and would spend countless hours obsessing over fairness, such as deciding if giving an older child an extra \$5 was fair, for example. He often imagined situations in which he was unfair, and would try to fix them - when no one had even noticed that he had been slightly unfair! I can't count the number of times that Pop would have a phone conversation with us, then hang up, then ring again just minutes later, to make sure he hadn't offended us with some comment that we couldn't even remember him saying! He was such a gentleman. Perhaps the greatest testament to his fairness is the habit he had a buying a lotto ticket, then sitting down with his potential winnings and pen and paper and divvying up the money to all his family fairly. He would often say that it's no point winning less than 2 million after it's all divided up! Poppy never did win the lotto, though we sure won the lotto by having Poppy in our lives.

Which brings me to generosity. Poppy grew up in the Great Depression, and was notoriously frugal with everyday things - a typical Scotsman some would say - but when it came to his family, he would give the shirt off his own back. All of us can hear Poppy saying right now "Do you have enough money?". He would fight other family members at the cash register, and would be a formidable opponent, slapping away cards and cash from other payment warriors who dared to pit their wills against Poppy. Poppy was also generous with his thoughts. As mum often says, Poppy's unspoken motto was "Don't worry - I'll worry for you!". Poppy spent many years of his life volunteering his time, whether it was with the Lions Club or the Museums, or at the local school. I remember one particular time he was called up by the school to talk to the kids about the internet. Pop was in his 80s at the time, and had no idea. He was a bit stressed about it, but not one

to turn down a challenge - he researched, showed up and taught the new generations about some futuristic technology that Poppy knew would change education as we know it.

Many of you here today were students of Mr McCowan, and I know you'll agree with me, when I say that Poppy McCowan was an inspiring man. After Poppy's passing, our family have had the honour of so many of you approaching us and telling us stories of how Poppy steered your life or encouraged you to achieve. He saw no child as a lost cause. He saw the potential and significance in everyone, and his greatest satisfaction in life was to see others shining in their own light. He never held back with compliments, and was gracious at receiving them too.

He valued education above all, and the only time Poppy ever raised his voice at me, was when he saw how I hold my pen, which is basically like i'm about to mash a tieta. I got so upset that i disappointed him, but soon realised that Poppy was instead angry that it might affect my education. I worked harder to show him my fast cursive writing, and I remember Poppy smiling as he shook his head. He was always humble in defeat. It was due to Poppy McCowan that I committed to a university degree when I wasn't sure where my life was going. Even though I never ended up working in the field I graduated in, I believe Poppy was right in that the higher level of education opened my mind, opened doors and opened up new opportunities.

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Poppy - continued

He believed any hurdle could be overcome by compassion and education, and he remained a teacher to me and many others, right up until the very end.

Our gentle, kind, fair, loving, generous and inspiring Poppy - you were also very funny. Did you know that Poppy used to live in Byron Bay? Poppy was an accomplished storyteller, though he was also a killer for repeating stories - but we never really minded, because the stories just got better with age! Poppy was also very kased, and he passed this trait down to all of us. One particular story that he loved to tell, was one of his grandson Matt who waddled over to Pop's house in his nappy, looking for an iceblock. Poppy gave him an iceblock, then teased him by asking if Matt had been a good little girl. Barely-talking Matt looked up at Poppy and simply called him "asshole". The story never failed to make Poppy giggle.

Pop was so much fun. He had some endearing Aussie-isms what we adored growing up, such as calling eggs googies and singing songs such as "Gday Gday and how ya goin?". Everywhere we went he would win hearts - and how could we forget the 2010 trip to Rapa Nui where he entranced a young Rapa Nui lady named Tia GuaGua who fed Poppy wedding cake and kissed him repeatedly on the cheek. I'm certain this little interaction added an extra 10 years to Poppy's life! He would often ask with a twinkle in his eye, whether we thought she liked him for his looks, or if she just thought he was rich.

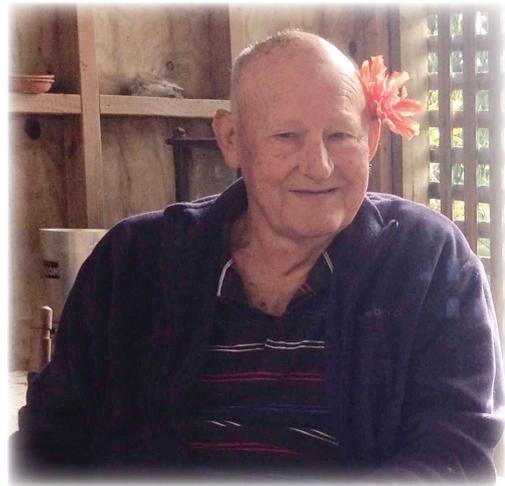
Well, Tia GuaGua, Poppy was rich, in every way that really mattered. He had an adoring family, great friends, and a wonderful community. He took great joy from music, and he remained young at heart by not letting his age cloud his big ideas. One of those big ideas was to rob a bank! He rationalised that jail wouldn't be so bad at his age if he got caught! Three meals a day, no taxes, and too old to attract the fancy of the other inmates! So, Poppy and the late John Pearson had it all planned. Poppy would get the cash, and John would drive the getaway car. Poppy had a wonderfully dry sense of humour. When asked what he would request if he made it to 100 years of age, Poppy said he would request 100 lantana bushes be planted in his honour.

When Marley was born in 2007, Poppy became a great grandfather. He was so chuffed about this, and would thank Marley for making him great. Poppy is now great, six times over, and I know I speak for my sister and my cousins when I say that it was the greatest honour to have him be a part of our children's lives. Pop was like a living guardian angel for us all. For my entire life, he was the constant wind in my sail - never wavering or changing course, and I'm so grateful to be his granddaughter.

Poppy passed away at 2pm on Sunday, and on Sunday evening, there was a beautiful full moon. I was driving home in a bit of a daze when I saw the moon rise over the crest of our beautiful island, and it seemed to follow me wherever I turned, gently shining its light on me. And I realised that this is how I feel about Poppy. He was a man with a pure intention to

reflect light and warmth on others. And even when we weren't aware of it, he was always there, gently sharing his light on us, guiding us with love. And I know this guidance will continue, because a compassionate teacher like Poppy McCowan never truly leaves us.

Which brings me back to your memoirs Poppy. I know you never got your chance to write them, however I see us all standing here today, in your honour, and I see all of those who you have touched, taught and guided and I know that we are all your living memoir. We each carry a part of you, our Dad, Poppy, Mr McCowan, Ian - and your stories and your contribution to this island will be talked about for many years to come. We love you Poppy.



Vale **Peter John Connolly**

1940-2018

Eldest of 3 children, Peter Connolly was born 24/12/1940 in Greymouth, New Zealand to Maurice and Ella Connolly. His sister Gillian died in infancy but his brother Glen continues to reside in Wellington, New Zealand.

Pete passed away on 23/08/2018 in Prince of Wales Hospital Sydney of a heart attack brought on by renal failure. He is survived by his wife Pat, his 4 children Gillian, Michael, Lisa and Sashie and several grandchildren and great grandchildren. He was greatly loved and will be missed always.

Interment of ashes will occur at a date to be announced.

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