Vale

Lona May Buffett

18 December 1934 - 11 October 2025

Eulogy by Caine Hassen Lonas Grandson

"Good Afternoon Yorlye,

Thank you all for coming together to help us celebrate the life of Lona Buffett or Mum, Nan or Granny as she was known to many of us.

My name is Caine and I have been granted the privilege of celebrating the life of my Nan today. I do so on behalf of her 8 children, and 40 other direct descendants, yes four zero! There may even be a stray or two unaccounted for, but you get the idea.

Despite being responsible for a large family of windbags and story tellers, she couldn't stand people who waffle on, so I will endeavor to keep this eulogy just like her, short and sweet.

And to be fair it is nigh on impossible to reflect on a life of over ninety years and talk just a little. For her story is not a single story, but a library of stories. She was a witness to history, a keeper of memories, and the author of a beautiful family epic.

She was our matriarch, and our north star, bear with me while I do my best to capture the essence of full life, well lived. She had a profound impact on all 49 of us.

Born on the 18th Dec 1934, in Ranelagh, Tasmania, Lona May Griggs was born to Pearl and Archie William, a sister to Irene, Gwen and Gary, all now deceased, she is survived by her little sisters Pattie and Gaye.

Ranelagh shares a lot in common with Norfolk, it's small town in the Huon Valley where most are referred to as Uncle or Aunty whether you were related or not, and it is a place where everybody might just know your business. Lona grew up on the quintessential Tasmanian Apple orchard with her family and would proudly talk about her Tassie heritage until she died.

Lona had a very close relationship with her father who passed away when she was just 11 years old, her mother Pearl remarried and luckily for all the children, she found a good husband and father to her children in George White.

Lona didn't like school. In fact, she hated it. She left school at the age of 15 to get a job in local shop, which came as quite the surprise to one of her first customers, the School principal, and an even bigger surprise to her parents. She didn't look back and eventually found a gig singing with a band in her late teens.

Lona moved to Hobart, and it was there that she met a strapping Norfolk Islander on a work trip down from Sydney. Goldie Buffett was in Hobart installing totalizer machines, the predecessors to the TAB at racecourses in 1952.

Their story started where all great romances start, in a pub. A butterfly-filled conversation led to a first date at a movie theatre and that was all it took. They quickly became smitten with each other.

As fate would have it, when Goldie returned to Sydney he was asked if he wanted to head to back to Tasmania to lead a team there, well he now had a very good reason to say yes and not just professional advancement. He returned just weeks later.

A visit by bus back home to the Huon Valley to meet her family followed soon after Goldies return. He fell in love with her family and her home. Over many fond weeks he grew attached to Lona and her family.

He recalls nervously going outside to ask Pearl for her daughter's hand in marriage. When he stumbled out his nervous request, she replied quickly "Please!" as in "Yes please!", misinterpreting the words Goldie quickly begged "Please?" and rolling laughter sealed the deal.

As Lona and Goldie planned their marriage, she found out that her registered birth name was actually Lorna May, which she never changed, but neither did she change being called Lona. She lived her life explaining that story till the end. Lona and Goldie married on 14th March 1953.

There are many fond memories of these early years in Tasmania, friendships formed, and attachments made. During that happy period, they had 3 children Steven, Melinda and Brent. The small family left Tasmania in 1958 to return here to Goldie's home on Norfolk.

It was a tough life when she came to Norfolk, no electricity, a new language to learn and clothes-washing was done on a wash board, it was years before the modern marvel of the wringer arrived. And clearly without electricity there was no television, so she promptly gave birth to another 5 children Shane, Leanne , Richard, Dean and Tane.

(continued overleaf)

Lona May Buffett - continued

Lona took a few different jobs around the Island over the years, predominantly working in the motel cleaning area and made lifelong friends along the way.

She put her all into building her home here, though they moved houses a few times. Her hands cooked many meals, held many babies, wiped tears, cupped faces and held others.

She was a quietly spoken lady, full of grace, gentleness and encouraging words, she was happy sipping her cup of tea and listening to her family babble on around her, unless, she thought you were being an idiot.

Then with a furrowed brow and a very direct stare she would come off the top rope and let you have it with both barrels. It was not a pleasant feeling to know you had disappointed her. She was at her core however, maternal and nurturing, she didn't just raise eight children, she raised many of her grandchildren too. She loved her family deeply and we orbited around her.

With great love and a long life comes pain and Nan suffered both love and loss in her 90 years. The passing of her sons Shane and Dean and her Grandson Myles affected her deeply and she grieved quietly. So, from her eight children she leaves behind 6 but will now be happily reunited with all of her boys.

She was not without health challenges and to be honest there has been a few occasions when we thought Nan had run her race. But like the true pocket rocket she was, just when you counted her out, she would get up off the canvas and throw a mean left hook and deliver it with a saucy word and a wink. Over the years Nan shrank from a peak of 5'2 to just over 4 feet.

We would joke with Nan that if she kept shrinking then when today arrived, she might just be buried in a shoe box. I can't help but feel she's having the last laugh at us that we needed the coffin and 4 pall bearers.

They say the true measure of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to rest. In that, Nan planted an orchard. She nurtured our family, she built it on a foundation of love and defending each other, and she has created beautiful shade for those of us left behind to live under, a legacy of comfort and strength will last another 90 years.

There was a running joke about who of all of us was the favorite, Nan was the consummate diplomat and claimed there was none. There are rumors that in recent years she may have said a name of a favorite out loud, but towards the end Nan suffered from moments of dementia and as we all know that makes any statement like that null and void.

Nan passed away on Saturday evening peacefully and pain free sleeping next Pa at Norfolk Island Hospital. If there is a better way to go I do not know it.

Nan is survived by her adoring husband Goldie, they enjoyed a wonderful 72 years together here and it is with a heavy heart full of love for this woman that we say goodbye today.

Grief, I've learned, is really just love. It's all the love you want to give, but cannot. All that unspent love gathers up in the corners of your eyes, as a lump in your throat, and in that hollow part of your chest. Grief is just love with no place to go. Rest in Peace Nan.

On behalf of the family can I thank David Buffett as I know he wont thank himself and he has been the good Shepard today

I'll leave you with this, a quote I think sums up the gratitude we all feel for a most graceful and loving woman, who gave us all the only gift we needed. Her everything.

The quote is from a surprising source, – Dr. Seuss *"Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened."*

Thank You

The family would like to thank the following people for their support

Care Norf'k support workers.

The ambulance staff, Jimmy and Petra.

The Nurses, Doctors, Pathologists and other staff at the Norfolk Island hospital.

Shane Quintal

Grave Diggers

David Buffett for guiding us through this difficult time

Our Pall Bearers Ian, Darren, Glenn and David

Rawson, JD and Clare for handing out the service sheets

The Ladies at the guide hall and those who offered their beautiful gardens to make our floral tributes and wreaths.

Karlene, Nettie and helpers for the mound

Jodie and Toni for the service sheet.

Trent for his sound system and leading the singing.

Hearse driver. Leonard.

Jen for her lovely cooking.

Joss for getting those of us here, who could be.

Wayne and Puck for the use of the vehicles

KaaWaa2899 streaming who's professionalism brought our big family from all over the globe, together.

All of those who travelled from overseas

All of those who offered condolences and messages of love and support from all side.

If we missed you in our thanks we apologise, we saw all of you and what you did for us.

These are the things that make Norf'k a family and awas hoem, thanks f uklun yorley.
