

OBITUARY – DOROTHY ROMAH JEFFREY née SIMMICH 28.7.1935 – 29.9.2024

It is with deep sadness that we advise members of the death of one of our most loved members, Dorothy Jeffrey, who passed away on Sunday 29 September at St. Vincent's Private Hospital, Kangaroo Point. She leaves behind three siblings, two daughters, two sons-in-law, two grandchildren and one great granddaughter.

She was born in the country town of Cooroy where her parents, Arthur and Gwendoline Simmich, owned a dairy farm of around 200 acres – 40 cows, one bull, pigs, chooks and cattle dogs. She was one of eight children: four boys and four girls.

Her education commenced at the one teacher school at Ridgewood in 1941. During the war she went to live with her grandmother and aunt Romah at Boonah where she enrolled in 1944 at the Boonah school. By July 1947, she was at Cooroy school as the family now had a farm there. That property was eventually sold and another dairy purchased in Tinbeerwah so Dorothy started at the one teacher school in 1948. It was there she did her scholarship exam – just three students in Grade 7. She clearly was successful and the next year was admitted to the secondary department of the Pomona school.

Attending so many different schools was probably the reason Dorothy had such an affinity with our school project – her work ethic probably started here as well since she and her siblings were required to do the chores around the farm before and after school. Her obsession with school indexing saw her through her illness and she was still indexing a week before she passed away. In all Dorothy contributed 1.52 million entries to the indexing projects of the society.

When her family moved to Brisbane in the early 1950s, they settled at Blackwood Road,



Mitchelton. At that time Dorothy worked in a dressmaking factory at Petrie Bight. On 19 December 1953, at age 18, she married Charles Notman Jeffrey at the Ann Street Presbyterian Church. They had three children – two daughters and a son Robert, who died in infancy.

After marriage Dorothy moved around quite a bit – Deception Bay,

Northgate, Annerley, Alderley, and finally back to Mitchelton. She decided, with the initial help of her mother-in-law, to go into retail selling. After the first shop at Mitchelton, a milk bar/general store, she purchased a number of shops and ran them with the assistance of her daughters. Life wasn't all work though – at the weekends she played tennis and basketball.

Dorothy's husband, Charles, sadly died on 24 March 1982 aged just 49 years.

Dorothy joined QFHS on 13 March 1990 and immediately began volunteering for the Society. She always seemed to know what had to be done, and without fanfare she would do it. One of her main achievements for us was securing the Gaythorne premises while she was President from 2004 to 2007.

She won many awards for her services to family and local history including: our Award for Services to Family History in 2003,¹ the Senior Volunteer Award (Order of Australia Association) in 2013,² was elected a Fellow of QFHS in 2016,³ and received the Centenary Medal from the Royal Historical Society of Queensland in 2020.⁴

A very outgoing person, Dorothy was well known to many organisations and societies including the State Library, the State Archives, and the schools to which she devoted much time assisting with their

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celebrations. She also played an active part in the local National Servicemen's Association branch, the Enoggera & Districts Historical Society, and the Friends of Toowong Cemetery.

Dorothy certainly lived a long and productive life – a life well spent has ended. Thank you for all you have done for the Society and for its members.

Lyn Hooper and Rosemary Kopittke

References:

¹ Award for Services to Family History – *Queensland Family Historian* Vol.25 No.1 February 2004.

² Senior Volunteer Award – *Queensland Family Historian* Vol.35 No.1 February 2014.

³ Fellow of Queensland Family History Society – *Queensland Family Historian* Vol.38 No.1 February 2017.

⁴ The Centenary Medal – *Queensland Family Historian* Vol.41 No.1 February 2020. ■