

**Eulogy**  
**Mrs Valma Kruse**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> September 2010**

Valma passed away at 8.00 am on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> August

*Delivered by Son-in-law Max Pfitzner:*

All of us here today are privileged to have known this wonderful lady.

Audery Valma Fuller was born at Peterborough on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1919 being the second child of Gordon and Ruth Fuller of Wobricoola Station near Yunta. Her siblings were Dudley and Jessie (both deceased).

Her early life was spent on Wobricoola where, as a little girl she developed a wonderful relationship with nature, the outdoors and wildlife.

Her pet collection was remarkable with kangaroos, birds, lizards and even a wedge-tailed eagle!

Because of the location, most of her primary schooling was done at home through correspondence with her mother as teacher.

She completed grade 7 at Yunta and did her secondary schooling boarding at Peterborough.

As a young woman she became involved in sport, particularly tennis, at which she excelled, and as most young country folk did, loved the music and the country dances.

It was in the town of Yunta where she first met (to steal a phrase from *The Back of Beyond*) the young 'carrier called Kruse'.

In the early war years she worked as a waitress in Adelaide whilst awaiting entry into the nursing training course.

This, however, didn't eventuate as Tom had other ideas and they were married in Pirie St Methodist Church on 24<sup>th</sup> Jan 1942.

A honeymoon with a difference was the trip to their new home in Marree.

Tom had bought a Studebaker car for \$35.00 (seventeen pounds ten shillings) which Valma travelled in with a young driver and Tom drove the newly acquired Leyland Badger truck which, of course, became famous in a later phase of their life.

Tom joined Valma in the Studebaker several miles from Marree and pointed to the mirage in the distance. That, he said, is Marree.

As they proceeded through the little tin town, they observed three elderly ladies sitting together - their combined age according to Tom was 293 years.

Valma said then..."If I die, please don't bury me here!" So, nearly seventy years on, we have found a better spot for you today!

Life must have been extremely difficult in Marree in those early years with Tom away on the Birdsville track for a lot of the time, a corrugated iron little house, the blistering heat, the sand and dust storms which necessitated Valma bringing the wheelbarrow and shovel into the house a couple of times a day to shovel out the sand. And when the dust storms stopped, the flies returned - in their millions!

Of course, no air conditioning or fans....in fact, just 12 volt power initially and a bit later, 32 volt.

This probably led to Valma's great cooking skill development on the little wood stove.

Her cooking was legendary and it was matched only by her incredible generosity.

She was forever supplying tucker for visitors, clients and the townsfolk as well as helping them with various tasks.

In addition to this she virtually ran the Shell agency single handed - doing the bookwork and manually pumping the fuel at all hours of the day and night.

When her first born (Pauline) arrived in late 19 43, Valma sometimes accompanied Tom on the Birdsville run with Pauline travelling in a tin baby bath.

Her love of tennis didn't wane and she was known to play up to her 8th month of pregnancy, often at dawn, as this was the only time one could withstand the heat.

In due course, her other children Helen, Phillip and Jeffery arrived.

She made most of the children's clothing.

When Tom took on the tank sinking work she spent more time away from Marree cooking initially on the wood stove in tents and eventually in the shed on wheels kitchen which Tom built. The breads she made were sensational!

Feeding the hungry workers as well as helping the children with their correspondence lessons was more than a full time job.

This was all taking place miles from nowhere in the 'back country' at a place they called "no man's land"...for good reason!

In 1963 Valma came to town and, at last started to live with some of the comforts of life.

However, she was still busy with ordering parts for the various machinery breakdowns and organising transportation of same to some pretty obscure places in the backcountry.

She developed a love of golf and enjoyed many golf trips.

When Tom was in town they loved to go to the races and the local footy, becoming members of the Crows and rarely missing a home game.

As time went on her mobility faltered a little but she managed well with a couple of new hips and a pacemaker.

Because of Tom's status, they were forever entertaining well-wishers and visitors from far and wide - which was a tiring task - but never a complaint from Valma - her unchanging patience persisted.

She has heard and paid attention to more stories than anyone on the planet. Occasionally offering an amendment or two if the yarns were becoming too embellished.

She dearly loved, and indeed helped nurture her eight grandchildren. In truth, she was like a second mother.

Sadly, three grandsons can't be with us today for geographical reasons but they are here in spirit.

And she adored her eighteen great grandchildren and loved having them around.

This love and affection, of course was reciprocated in full measure.

They, like us, have always found her to be fair, non judgemental, and extremely generous.

From all of us we say, Valma - thank you for the privilege of knowing you, loving you and being a part of your family.

Max Pfitzner

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