

Vale Maureen McLoughlin

Anne Stevens (President of The Aisling Society of Sydney 1982-83, 2004-06 and Secretary 1975-77) recalls Maureen McLoughlin:

I first met Maureen McLoughlin in the early 1970s when I joined The Aisling Society of Sydney. Around that time, Maureen became the society's Treasurer - a role which she would carry out with great distinction for almost 40 years. It was only the onset of ill health in her later years which prompted her resignation from that role - an event which we all accepted as inevitable, but with great regret.

Without doubt, Maureen helped reinvigorate a Society in need of a boost, as the members of its founding generation were growing fewer in number. Her boundless energy, her ideas and innovations helped to turn things around at that time, and the flourishing, successful Aisling Society of today, recognised and respected throughout the Irish community, academia and beyond, owes her a very great deal.

Her enthusiasm - and her efficiencies with our finances - helped open up many new paths for the Society, including University prizes, seminars, a recorded oral history of the Society by prominent members, the publishing of a well received book of talks delivered by many excellent and eminent speakers over the years in time for our 50th Anniversary. This book would not have been possible save for Maureen's foresight in keeping copies of talks in the early days, and later recording all talks on tape and disc.

Maureen was very much more than the retired treasurer of a society dedicated to the awareness and study of Irish culture, history and affairs. She was probably one of the most widely known and loved members of the Irish community in Sydney. Maureen simply knew everybody Irish in Sydney. Her work extended far beyond the Aisling, to liaising with all other Irish organisations - social, charitable, academic or business oriented. In her personal life she showed great kindness and empathy - she would visit the sick and those down on their luck. She would cook and take them meals, organise flowers for funerals, help raise money to care for young Irish travellers in need, and so many other deeds - her legendary jars of pickles that flew off the tables at fundraising fairs. She worked for many years as a volunteer at Calvary Hospital and at her local church. She touched many lives both Irish and Australian. She was much loved.

Australian-born of Irish parents, Maureen, always demonstrated a deep yearning and love for Ireland. This devotion saw her return many times to visit her large Irish family, and also to see - just one more time - her beloved Glens of Antrim.

She was in recent years in retirement and hospital care, a person of great standing, integrity and importance within the Irish community and beyond. Her love of Ireland was truly the driving force and inspiration for her whole life - a great and worthy "Irish" Australian.

May she rest in peace.

Anne Stevens