

Honouring the Past – Securing the Future

Margaret Gibson, Dulcie Battaglione and Bruce Shepherd made a donation to The Mackay Foundation to build a secure future for the community in honour of

ALAN CAMERON SHEPHERD

Alan Cameron Shepherd was born on September 12, 1905, the son of Jack and Lilian Shepherd. Pioneering blood ran in his family – Joseph Norris, his maternal grandfather, was the first school teacher in Mackay and Daniel Shepherd, his paternal grandfather, was an early shopkeeper who traded as Shepherd Anvil Stores.

Alan was educated at the Mackay Central School and then at the Mackay High School. In 1921 he became a message boy with James Croker & Sons. Crokers was his first and last workplace – he remained an employee until his retirement in 1975. He studied at night to become an accountant and became a partner in 1938. When the managing partner Raymond Croker died in 1942, Alan took over his role.

Alan became a giant in Mackay business with a professional life extending from 1921 to 1975. Crokers was the Mackay agent for Adelaide Steamship Co until the opening of the Mackay Outer Harbour in 1939. Crokers were the supplier of goods to the sugar industry including fertilizer, fuel and oil, coal, lime and insurance, and under Alan's direction, they expanded into steel products.

The adoption of his sound business principles laid the foundation for business success. Credit extended to their customers allowed many farmers extra time until final payment was made on their crops. In return these farmers gave their loyalties to the firm and on this basis, a strong relationship with the Mackay sugar and cattle industry grew and prospered.

Crokers & Sons traded in the same way as Michelmores, Shepherds, Marsh & Webster, Lamberts and many other leading Mackay's businesses. World War Two meant severe shortages of labour and the rationing of goods, so these stores were on war-time footing serving the nation on the home front.

Alan's church and community service earned him widespread recognition and respect. He was a long-time member of Mackay Rotary Club and managed the School of Arts and the library. Since his youth he was a member of St Paul's Presbyterian Church. He was an important member of the St Paul's session and gave the original large donation that saw the building of the Homefield Home for the Aged built on the site of the old Jerry Michelmore residence. He dedicated much of his later years to ensuring the success of Homefield. He was very 'hands on' in the development of the property and in the building.

Alan married Enid Christie in 1930 and had four children; Margaret, Dulcie, Jean and Bruce. He died in 1987. Alan was indeed a second generation Mackay pioneer who contributed to the growth of Mackay and the surrounding regions.

