

Honouring the Past – Securing the Future

Ian, Scott and Robert Braithwaite have made a donation to The Mackay Foundation to build a secure future for the community in honour of

MAVIS LILIAN BRAITHWAITE

Mavis Lilian Rigbye was born in Mackay on July 2, 1936, the eldest child of Harold and Isabelle Rigbye. She was followed by siblings Joyce and Colin. At the age of five, Mavis began her music studies at Pansy Wood's music studio at 34 Peel Street. She was one of many students devoted to music, the piano being her greatest passion, and she continued under Miss Wood's direction until her marriage at the age of 21. Practicing the piano daily for hours was a discipline imposed by both her mother and Miss Wood.

At the age of 14 Mavis was recognised as the youngest person in Mackay to pass her A.Mus.A. with the Australian Music Examination Board. By the age of 16 she was an Associate of the Trinity College of London (ATCL) in performance and gained her Licentiate (LTCL) in October 1955. In October 1957, Mavis was the only one of 11 entrants in Queensland to pass her Licentiate with the AMEB - L.MusA.



Mavis competed in Mackay Eisteddfod for many years and on four consecutive occasions won the JM Graham trophy for outstanding performance in the instrumental section. Adjudicators' descriptions of her performances included 'brilliant' and 'mature'. In 1949 she played a piano duet with Muriel Fawcett in Australia's Amateur Hour and again in 1957 as a soloist playing Chopin's Fantaisie Impromptu. She was a foundation member of the Mackay Junior Choral Society and a guest artist at many Mackay Choral Society concerts.

She was an accompanist for the Mackay Choral Society, for soloists and school choirs and an organist at St Paul's Uniting Church where her playing for church services, choir, weddings and funerals continues to this day. She played for the yearly RAD ballet examinations for Lynette Denny at Warralong Studios as well as eight other dance studios throughout the region for more than 30 years.

Mavis worked as a bank clerk at the Commercial Bank of Australia before marrying Ray Braithwaite on May 10, 1958. This ended her ambition to become a concert pianist. Whilst raising three sons, Ian, Scott and Robert, she continued to teach piano and had great success with her students' examinations. Mavis the artist also emerged in other forms; oil painting, violin playing, ceramics and parchment card making. She remains a penciller at the Mackay Eisteddfod and a working friend at the Mackay Entertainment Centre. Mavis was a member of the Belltones Handbell group and now plays with the U3A Chimes group.

Like her tutor Pansy Wood, Mavis is a perfectionist and maintains her passion for playing and appreciating classical and church music. She has made a significant contribution to the arts in the Mackay community through both her piano playing and teaching during the 20th century.