

Honouring the Past – Securing the Future

Val Dawson has made a donation to The Mackay Foundation to build a secure future for the community in honour of

LAWRENCE WILLIAM BYRNE AND MARGARET LEITH BYRNE

Lawrence William Byrne, better known as Lance, was born on October 8, 1909 at Charters Towers. The family moved to Mackay where Lance and his father built their home in Evans Street, adjacent to the railway line which ran between Evans and George Streets.

Lance began his teaching career at the age of 13 as a student teacher. Throughout his career, he taught scholarship classes at the Intermediate School, in Alfred Street. When the higher level classes were transferred to the high school, this building then became the state primary school for the area. Lance continued his teaching career at the North Mackay and Mackay State High Schools until his retirement. He was a wonderful musician and also taught music at school. He played the piano, ukulele, guitar and had a true tenor voice and was a member of the St. Paul's Presbyterian Church choir.



During the war years he was committed to the Air Training Corps where he assisted in training enlisted men prior to them transferring to the Regular Air Force to serve their country.

Lance Byrne married Margaret Leith McGinn in 1931 and they built a new home at 21 English Street where they raised their family; a daughter, Valerie, and four sons, John, William, Peter, and Neil. Leith Byrne was the youngest daughter of James and Liliias McGinn, a well-known pioneering family in Mackay. Her father was an engineer for the Mackay and Pioneer Shire councils and was renowned for many of the region's early projects including building the first road up Eungella Range and a suspension bridge over Sandy Creek, south of Mackay. He was also responsible for constructing tram lines to service the sugar mills in the Sarina and Pioneer Valley areas.

Leith Byrne was a very accomplished pianist with an outstanding natural ability. Although she was never officially taught and could not read music, she had a natural flair for the piano.

Throughout their lives, the couple enjoyed playing golf, with Lance serving on the Mackay Golf Club committee for many years. He was also a talented tennis player and enjoyed furniture-making. The pair was also involved in the Mackay Eisteddfod and various church choirs and concerts.

Margaret Byrne died at her home in English Street on September 20, 1985 and her husband Lance passed away at the Mackay Base Hospital on December 20, 1986.