

Honouring the Past – Securing the Future

Isabella Ellen (Johnno) Fawcett has made a donation to The Mackay Foundation to build a secure future for the community in honour of

EDWARD CHARLES WILLIAM (TOOTIE) COWAN

Edward Charles William (Tootie) Cowan was born in Mackay on June 4, 1922, to William and Ellen Cowan, the eldest of four children including Bob, Beryl and Johnno. He attended school at North Eton and Mirani, worked for Harold Rowe Snr handling horses, cut cane at Mirani West and owned and operated the BP and Castrol oil agency for 40 years. He projected films at Mirani movies and was a keen tennis player with the Mirani team which won three championships.



Tootie's career as an amateur jockey began at the age of 17. At the inaugural meeting of the Eton Diggers Race club he rode all the winners in the program including the Eton Diggers Cup. His record for riding winners included seven Mackay Diggers Cups, the first in 1941 and the last in 1960. He won four Diggers Ladies Bracelets. In 1943 Tootie rode one horse to two wins on the same day, the Diggers Cup and the Diggers Bracelet. In 1952 he repeated this amazing double.

He rode seven Sarina Diggers Cup winners and had success at several country meetings. By the time he had retired as an amateur jockey at 42 years of age he had been presented with several whips and awards for being the most successful jockey at numerous amateur racing carnivals and was the winner of three Daily Mercury awards as the region's most successful jockey.

Tootie became a licensed trainer and went on to train a horse that won 15 races from 15 starts and another of his horses won nine races and two seconds from 11 starts. He trained two winners in the Mackay Newmarkets, the winner of the first International Powder Puff Derby in Mackay, two Pragueland Stakes and two Mackay Diggers Bracelets. He trained winners of the Talbot Heatley Lighting Handicap, the TL Heatley Amateur Bracelet, the Cleveland Bay Handicap, two North Queensland Cups in Townsville, the Innisfail Cup and the Wilf Davies Memorial Handicap in Homehill.

In 2000, Tootie was awarded the Australian Sports Medal recognizing his lifetime of service to racing, an award within the Australian Honours System and was awarded life membership by the Mackay Turf Club for 60 years spent as an amateur jockey and trainer. In 2013 he was made a life member of the Mackay Amateur Club.

In 1946 Tootie married Gladys Davey and they had three sons Sydney, Peter and John. Gladys passed away in 2010.

His talent and tenacity ensured Tootie Cowan made a significant contribution to both the regional racing industry and the local community. He was indeed a "King" in the sport of Kings.