

MARIE LOUISE MILL : TEACHER 1958 - 1960

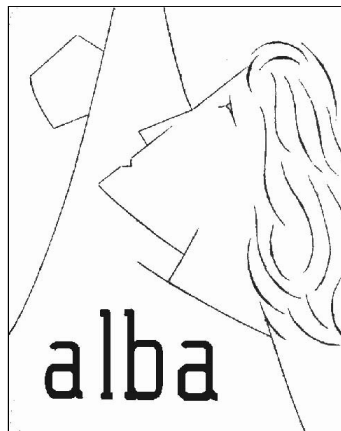


Marie Louise Phillips was born in 1926 to Houghton Henry Jason Phillips (1882-1932) and Sylvia Antoinette Harling (1894-1988). The Phillips ancestry goes back to 1776 in Gloucestershire, England; Henry Phillips emigrated to New South Wales prior to 1847 and married Mary Weller.

The Harling ancestry goes back to 1781 in Norfolk England. Christopher Edwin Harling Barrett emigrated to Amherst Victoria and married Mary Ann Lydia Marshall in 1857.

In 1948 Marie Louise Antoinette Phillips married Ian McDonald Mill who was a teacher. Marie gave birth to three children - Marcia, Rosalind, and Malcolm - so for a while she performed the traditional "home duties" while taking care of the youngsters. In 1949 the family was based in Caulfield West and Kew before moving to Sunbury in 1954. In 1955 they moved to Bardsley Street, Sunshine, and the City of Sunshine became their base in the 1970s.

From 1958 to 1960, Marie Mill and her husband Ian were teaching at St Albans High School. He had obtained a B.A. and Dip.Ed. qualifications but her qualifications are not stated in the school magazines. Marie and Ian were not the first married couple who were teaching at the school, as that credit belongs to James and Bernice Barker. James Barker was the first Head Master at the school from 1956 and his wife Bernice Barker was the first teacher of English. Mr Barker was still in charge in 1958 and reflected on the ethnic diversity of the neighbourhood:



"As our school consists of children of twenty-eight different races of different creeds and culture, there is a great need for tolerance here. Because of this fact, we also have great opportunities to practice tolerance and only the unpredictable future will show whether we have succeeded or failed. Of course our task will be all the harder next year when our school will expand with the addition of 260 new pupils. Australians have the main role to play as they help the New Australians to settle down and become accustomed to this new life. The teachers also help as some of them are Europeans and have a knowledge of some European Language to help out."

The most significant event in 1958 for teachers and students alike was the official opening of the school by the Minister for Education, John Stoughton Clark Bloomfield, who had a local connection as he had married Beatrice Madge Taylor, the daughter of Keilor pioneer William Taylor.



The Minister of Education with students at the Opening of the School 1958.

In 1959 Marie Mill was Form Teacher for 1G and House Mistress for Jacarandah. Unfortunately there are no references to her other teaching duties in the Alba magazines of the time. However, she appears to have achieved some credit with Form 1G:

"Being all girls we chatter a great deal but we also form a group of happy, friendly girls; perhaps we are often accused of not shining in scholastic subjects but we have given our share of contributions towards our school. We have contributed to a French play on Education Day; freely and gladly helped in supplying odds and ends to make the play successful. We have also had a cake and toffee stall in aid of the school tuck-shop. We have had an enjoyable year. We think our teachers are wonderful; to them we extend our thanks for their help and tolerance during our first year at St. Albans High."



Mr James Barker and Staff at St Albans High 1959

During the 1960s, Marie and Ian Mill were teaching in country areas. In 1963 they were in Robinvale (Mallee) and in 1968 they were in Kyabram. In 1972 they returned to Sunshine and were living in The Esplanade at Maidstone. She was still a Teacher and he was now a Principal, but their schools placements have not been found.



During the 1970s and 1980s Ian Mill was involved in community action through the Sunshine Council and was one of the main leaders of the Western Region Council for Social Development (WRCSD) that was part of the Australian Assistance Plan established after Gough Whitlam and the Australian Labor Party was elected in 1972. In 1985 Ian Mill received the OAM in The Queen's Birthday 1985 Honours List for Service to the Community.

Marie's involvement in the community at this time has not been discovered. Ian was Mayor of Sunshine for some time during the 1970s and 1980s and Marie would have accompanied him to important social and community events, and would have sat on several committees. The major public acknowledgement of her community work was through the naming of a neighbourhood house in Randall Street, Maribyrnong, as The Marie Mill Community Centre, which was established in the 1980s. (In later years it was renamed as the Maribyrnong Community Centre and continues to function as a neighbourhood house.)

Ian and Marie retired to Maryborough, to which Marie had family connections. Ian McDonald Mill died in 2008 at age 86 and was buried at Springvale, Greater Dandenong City, Victoria. Marie Louise Mill nee Phillips died in 2021 at age 95:

Dearly loved wife of Ian, and beloved mother of Marcia, Rosalind and Malcolm.

Loved sister of Sylvia, Ninon, and of brother Fred.

Loved and adored grandmother of Riley, Shelley, Renee, Leon, Isabel, Esther, Malachi, Andre, Evette, Belinda, Micah, Brigitte, Jasmine, Tiffany, Zachary, Georgia and Aidan.

Loved great grandmother of Alianna, Shiera, Zoe, Indiana, Saffron, Matheus, Annabel, Sadie, Macey, Coby, Marly, Thomas, Lochlan, Amelia, and Otto.

You have brought so much joy to so many people throughout your wonderful 95 years.

Your compassion, altruism and never ending warmth was inspirational to us all.

We will miss you dearly. We love you Marie.



Marie and Ian Mill in retirement in Maryborough.

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Article written by Joe Ribarow
School photos from Nick Szwed archives.