



Lois Margaret Kimpton was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 46 in East Melbourne, the second child to George Henry Kimpton and Winifred Marion Kimpton nee Millard. Lois was the younger sister of Neil Lennox Kimpton, born 28<sup>th</sup> March 1945 and, eventually, the older sister of Beverley Anne Kimpton, born 6<sup>th</sup> August 1951.

Her father George worked at the Kimpton Flour Mills in North Melbourne as a flour miller, one of the very large Kimpton clan that populated the inner north west working class areas of Melbourne. Her mother Win was a seamstress who generally worked from home, being paid in accordance with the pieces produced.

For the first 4 years of Lois's life, the young family lived with Win's mother Maud in Nicholson St, just a stone's throw down from the Exhibition Building in Carlton. Maud had a rambling two story terrace and took in boarders to make the ends meet. The young family occupied the downstairs section with her and any current boarders were on the higher level.

In the aftermath of WWII and with Victoria's population rising quickly, the Housing Commission of Victoria implemented a public housing project in the late 1940s, building tens of thousands of houses and flats in Melbourne and many country towns, providing low rent housing for low income families.

One of the first areas targetted was Fawkner, then a mainly rural suburb on the northern outskirts of Melbourne. In 1950, the young family moved to 26 Queens Parade Fawkner, part of the first influx of families into the brand new housing commission estate. It was not the pristine new estate we might envisage these days – the roads were unmade, footpaths were non existent and connection to the sewerage system was something for the future.

No kindergarten in those days! In 1951, Lois started school at the Fawkner Primary School in Lynch Rd. She and older brother Neil walked through the goat paddocks to get there.

Lois was no moddly coddled young girl. She grew up in working class Housing Commission Fawkner, playing in the endless open areas adjoining the Merri Creek with the many other children in what was a community of young post-war working class families. Her younger sister Bev, who was born in August 1951, was born into that community and the family lived there throughout their growing lives.

In 1958, Lois started secondary school at the Fawkner High School in Jukes Rd. Being further from Queens Parade, she and Neil (and eventually Bev) rode their bikes to and from school each day.

In Form 3, Lois chose the commercial stream in preference to continuing on with French. In those days, that meant subjects like shorthand, typing, accounting and economics. She retained her shorthand skills for her entire life and it came in handy on many occasions.

Fawkner HS only went to Leaving Certificate (what we call Y11) in those days and Lois duly completed her Leaving Certificate in 1962. For many of those working class children, that was where their schooling finished. It was, after all, called the 'Leaving Certificate'. Of course, many never even made it that far. The 1962 Fawkner HS Speech Night booklet advises that in the 1961 end of year exams, 69 students (Lois included) had qualified for the Intermediate Certificate (Y10) but that only 10 (Neil included) had qualified for their Leaving Certificate. Many still left at age 15 or 16 and entered the work force for good.

With her Year 11 completed, Lois took up a job at the Taxation Office, initially checking tax returns. Being a conscientious and enthusiastic youngster with a sharp mind, she found she normally completed her daily allocation of returns by morning tea. To her surprise, she was instructed to go slower and not make everyone else look bad. After 6 weeks, she had had enough and determined to go back to school.

As Fawkner HS did not offer Matriculation, and as Coburg HS did not offer economics, Lois went to Moreland HS for her final year of school, studying English, Economics, Accounting, Geography and British History.

Lois was accepted into Law at Melbourne University in 1964 but did not win one of the highly sought after Commonwealth Scholarships. So she accepted her second choice, which was Commerce, and signed on for a Studentship with the Education Department. The department would meet all University fees and provide a living allowance. In return, Lois would work for 2 years as a teacher, wherever she was sent - it could be anywhere in Victoria.

Lois met Jenny Kimpton when they both started in first year Commerce at MU in 1964, a friendship that has lasted a lifetime.

Her time at University was wonderful. Her older brother Neil was also there, although one year ahead of her and doing a B.Arts. For a working class Fawkner girl, it was an eye opener. For instance, the now famous historian Geoffrey Blainey was Lois's Economic History lecturer and tutor.

She completed her Undergraduate studies over 4 years (1964-1967) but was unable to graduate with her B. Comm., as she had failed one subject along the way. In the normal course of things, she would have completed that the following year and then graduated, but her Studentship commitment meant she had completed her years of supported study and was now be expected to do a further 1 year of teacher training and join the workforce. As she could not do her Dip. Ed., she completed her one year Trained Secondary Teacher's Certificate (TSTC).

Lois started her teaching career in 1968, being sent to Flemington HS. After only 2 weeks there, she was sent to Wodonga High School, where she spent a very happy 3 years. You had to go where you were sent, no questions asked. She was told on the Friday that she would be starting at Wodongo HS on the following Monday morning.

During her first year in Wodonga, she boarded. In her second year she shared a rental house with some other teachers and in the third year, she boarded with June and Ted Robertson. We have remained firm friends with the Robertsons ever since.

This is where she met Kath Roberts, another first year teacher up from Melbourne. Thus another life long friendship was kindled.

In those days, young teachers were externally reviewed by School Inspectors, a controversial task that was eventually dropped by the Education Department after much industrial lobbying. She was inspected in July 1968 as a First Year Teacher. The report read

*A quietly efficient and reliable young teacher who communicates well with her classes, encourages them to produce work of good quality, and is a willing and helpful staff member.*

Although Lois only had to stay at Wodonga for 2 years, according to the Studentship rules, she stayed on for a third year, as she enjoyed it so much.

During her first 3 years of teaching at Wodonga, she taught Y11 and Y12 Accounting and Economics, Y11 Typing and Shorthand, Commercial Principles and Practice, Typing and Communication, and a mixture of Y9 and 10 Commercial subjects. Not too bad for a young girl in her very early twenties!

In 1971, Lois returned to Melbourne, teaching full time at Niddrie HS and completing that one final University subject to complete her degree, a Bachelor of Commerce.

It's hard for us to imagine Lois' new life. She was now mixing with all sorts of people, many with radical views (teaching in the working class suburbs attracted many with strong and sometimes controversial world views) and she had that hope for a better Australia that would eventually lead to the election of the Whitlam Government in 1972. Lois was from a strong Labor Party family.

At the start of 1971, Lois and Kath drove across the unmade Nullabor Plain to Western Australia to wave bon voyage to Neil who was on his way to England. They carried a tent for those occasions when they had to sleep out but came to grief when the ground was too hard and they could not hammer in the pegs. On that occasion, they spent the night sleeping in their little car. After a final farewell at the dock in Fremantle, they drove back to Melbourne to start their next teaching year.

During her time in Wodonga, Lois also embarked on another cross country expedition, this time with Jenny and Kath and Sandra, another friend. When camping at the Wilpena Pound in the Flinders Ranges in remote South Australia, they were taken under the wings of a group of scouts who took it upon themselves to help these young city girls. Their tent failed them yet again, in a heavy storm, and they had to endure another night in a small car, but with 4 people this time rather than just two.

Perhaps inspired by that final farewell wave from the Fremantle dock, Lois and Kath then decided to do their own European trip in 1972, and take in the Munich Olympics. They left in January 1972, disembarking in London. Lois picked up a temporary teaching job as an emergency teacher at Holland Park Comprehensive and Kath got a job waitressing. For Lois, her first placement was a daunting introduction to the English Comprehensive System. Kids would turn on fire hydrants on the top floor each lunchtime, so that all the staircases got flooded.

It was a different world to Australia!

On their way to the Olympics, Lois and Kath did a 5 week camping trip through Holland, Scandinavia, Finland, the USSR, Poland and East Germany. Leaving the trip in Berlin, they got a train to Munich. Little did they realise that their Olympic experience would be overwhelmed by the 'Munich Massacre' in which eleven Israeli athletes and coaches and a West German police officer at the Olympic village would be killed by Palestinian Black September terrorists.

Upon returning to London, Lois sourced a full time permanent teaching job at the Gilliat Girls School in Fulham, a much better place to teach.

Gilliat Girls School eventually combined with the local Fulham Girls Grammar to create Fulham Gilliat Girls School, and Lois was happy to keep teaching there. One interesting story from that period concerns an ongoing bomb threat. At the same time each Wednesday, a bomb threat would be called into the local police and the school would be evacuated (this was the days of the IRA bombing campaign). No bomb was ever found and the word was that it was a disgruntled student who hated one particular class so much that this was the innovative way in which to deal with it.

As usual, typing and shorthand were amongst the many commercial subjects Lois taught. The other staff were very impressed by Lois's typing speed and shorthand prowess, which seemed superior to their own – a

fitting tribute to Fawkner High School! The only issue was that Lois has been taught Dacomb Shorthand, a shorthand system unique to Australia, whereas England used a quite different system. So Lois taught English Shorthand but continued to use Dacomb herself.

When Kath and Lois had first arrived in 1972, they looked for a local Anglican Church and found St Dionis in Parsons Green. Lois spent 3 very happy years as part of the St Dionis community, forming many friendships which survive to this day.

A year after Lois and Kath arrived in London, Kath's sister Jenny joined them. Now a threesome, they trundled all over England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales in Lois' little Morris Minor, availing themselves of whatever holidays were available.

More extensive continental trips included a St Dionis parish pilgrimage to the Holy Land and a long bus trip through France, Germany, Austria, Italy and Greece.

Early in 1973, Lois briefly returned to Australia, where she was a bridesmaid at her sister Bev's wedding to Greg. Then it was straight back to London to resume her teaching.

When Jenny left London to return to Australia late in 1974, Lois stayed on to see out the school year. At the end of 1974, she had to choose whether to apply for British residency or return to Australia. She loved London and England but her family was in Melbourne. She chose to return home, leaving Kath with her newly minted husband Laurie in England.

1975 saw Lois teaching at the Collingwood Education Centre (now Collingwood HS) which was then located in a series of portable classrooms in the Edinburgh Gardens in North Fitzroy. The staff was an especially radical one and it was a further eye opener for Lois. She did a lot of her teaching in a little room in the Clifton Hill Shopping Centre in Queens Parade and was left pretty much to her own devices. That suited her!

In the 1975 Christmas holidays, Lois saw an advertisement for a new Christian Community school called Braemar College, about to start in Mt Macedon, replacing the old Clyde College. She was successful in her application and she moved to Mt Macedon in early 1976, where she rented an outhouse in one of the properties on the mount.

Her time there was busy by any standard, with Y12 Commercial and Legal Studies, Y11 Accounting, Economics, Commercial and Legal Studies and Typing, along with Y7 Biblical Studies. Add in roles as Commerce Coordinator, Bookshop Coordinator and Camp Coordinator and you start to wonder how she survived. But survive she did, and thrived. Alas, it did not last.

The initial staff of 17 were imbued with the idea of setting up and building a Christian Community, but the principal was the odd one out, his vision to create a public school in the image of Geelong Grammar. Friction was not long in building and, at the end of 2 years, the vast majority of the staff had had enough and resigned en masse, Lois amongst them. In all, 13 of the 17 staff left at the end of the 1977 school year. As with everywhere else, Lois formed many life long friendships at Braemar and cherished and built on them after she left.

Lois, along with fellow Braemar teacher Marg Brickhill, signed on at St Bernard's College in West Essendon, a Catholic boys school for the start of the 1978 school year. She was certainly garnering a wide variety of teaching jobs! As usual, her load included Y11 and Y12 Accounting, along with Y11 Economics. Lois was now a senior teacher and her teaching duties reflected her seniority, albeit still relatively young. There she met her Tim, a romance blossomed and they were married at St Linus Church in Merlynston on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1978.

Lois continued to teach at St Bernard's, alongside Tim, until the end of 1979, when she resigned, heavily pregnant with her first son David. David was born in February 1980. He was followed by Chris in December 1981, Paul in October 1983 and Matthew in December 1986. One of my main memories of those times is the 8 years and 9 months of cloth nappies, with only a 3 month reprieve between Paul and Matthew.

The coming of a family put Lois's career aspirations on hold, and it was not until Matthew started school in 1992 that she could finally break free of the household shackles and return to a more extensive teaching.

But she did manage to return to some session teaching (6-8 hours per week) at Broadmeadows TAFE (eventually to be renamed as Kangan TAFE) in 1986, teaching in their HSC/VCE department in the evenings. The role of a full time mother was not for her. She wished to retain her career as a teacher and be out there at the coal face. She loved her time at Kangan and stayed there right through to 2005, 20 years in all. As always, she took lasting friendships away from there.

It was certainly another different teaching experience, as, apart from her usual spread of Y12 subjects, she taught units as varied as Workplace Communications, Industrial Relations and Dealing with Conflict to the many apprentices and pre-apprentices who cycled through the system year by year.

In 1993, with all 4 of our boys finally at school, she additionally took up a half time teaching role at Brunswick Grammar St Basil's Greek Orthodox College in West Brunswick, taking on Y11 and Y12 Legal Studies and Y10 commerce. She would drop our kids to school, do her teaching, then pick them up from school and switch back to her role as mother and home maker, except for those nights when she was teaching at Kangan, when I would take over the household reins.

She retained her role as a VCE Legal Studies teacher throughout the nineties, serving on the Board of Studies / Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority from 1996 to 2001 as a VCE Legal Studies Examination Assessor.

Lois had wanted to study Law and had been accepted into the degree course at Melbourne University after finishing school, but had had to take on a Teaching Studentship due to financial necessity. In 2002, she was accepted into the Victoria University Law Faculty. Finally, approaching 56 years of age, she would have her chance.

Being given one year's reprieve because of her Commerce degree, she would only have to do the equivalent of 3 years of full time study to gain her Law Degree. She threw herself into the course and studied hard in 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005, finishing with a pleasing mix of High Distinctions and Distinctions and graduating with a *Bachelor of Laws (With First Class Honours)* in 2006. Along the way, she won a number of prestigious academic awards:

2003: Butterworth Lexis Nexis Australia Prize: Best Student, *Australian Legal System in Context*

2004: Thompson Student Prize: Best Student, *Advocacy and Communications*

2005: Lexis Nexis Award: Best Student, *Advanced Legal Research Dissertation*

She was also the Victorian University Nominee for the 2006 Victorian Law Foundation Chief Justice's Medal for Excellence and Community Service.

2006 also saw Lois nominated for the annual *Honouring Women in Moreland Awards* for facilitating educational opportunities. This recognised her 23 years of service to the St Linus Kindergarten in Coburg North.

In March 2004, she had also started work as a student volunteer with the Public Interest Law Clearing House (PILCH) and as a para-legal assistant at the Broadmeadows Community Legal Service (BCLS), as first steps into the world of Law.

She worked for PILCH for a little over a year, taking on the role of Acting Co-Coordinator, before leaving to take up an internship with the Victoria Law Foundation (VLF). In September 2005, she moved to a permanent role with VLF as Community and Educational Consultant.

In late 2006, Lois completed her *Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice* at the Leo Cussen Institute in the city. Once she finished her Leo Cussen course, she was now a lawyer in all but name.

She was finally admitted to the legal profession as an Australian Lawyer on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2006, probably the proudest moment in her long professional life. 12 months later, she was admitted to practice as a Barrister and Solicitor. Not that she wanted to do court work or aspired to Private Practice. She saw her role as a Community Lawyer and she had a foot in the door with her role at the Broadmeadows Community Legal Service.

With her piece of paper, she could now take on a role as a Community Lawyer with BCLS, based in the heartland of Broadmeadows, a working class suburb with high unemployment, ongoing social issues and a high migrant density. And she loved it! The Service was based in an old converted house and their clientel was diverse, as were the cases. It is true to say that there was never a dull moment, and many was the story with which we were regaled of an evening.

Lois also worked as an outreach lawyer after the 2008 bush fires, helping many families who had lost everything work their way through the intricacies of the legal system to rebuild their lives.

Sadly, nothing lasts forever and the vibrant BCLS was eventually merged with a struggling Moreland CLS, becoming a single large Community Legal Centre based at Gladstone Park. Lois continued to work there for a couple more years before deciding, in 2016, that 10 years was enough and that it was time to retire. It was no longer the CLC that she had joined. But like all her previous jobs, she took her share of ongoing and lasting friendships from here as well.

This marked the end of her working life. At 70 years of age, it had been a great run. She now set up her own Private Practice from home, doing Wills and sorting out small legal matters for friends over the next few years, but just to keep her finger on the pulse, rather than as a job.

Another factor driving her decision to retire in 2016 was a serious cancer set back in 2015. Lois used to joke that while I was always carrying an injury of some sort from my ongoing athletics, she had rarely had a sick day or a niggle during her entire life. And it was true – until 2015, when she was diagnosed with endometrial cancer, had to undergo a large operation, with 3 weeks further in hospital, followed by 6 months of intensive chemotherapy.

In truth, Lois never really fully recovered from that initial encounter. When the cancer flared up again in 2018, a further 6 months of chemo was required. Then it was back again only 8 months later, more aggressive the third time around and no longer responding to treatment.

Lois's last trip was with Jenny Roberts in 2019. They flew to Canberra for the Pre-Raphaelite exhibition, hired a car and revisited their old haunts from trips past.

Further setbacks meant more trips to hospital, the last one less than 2 months ago. With the cancer now progressed to the palliative care phase, she and I decided to try to survive on the home front as long as we could – the prospect of going back to hospital, possibly for good, during the COVID lockdown, was not something that either of us wanted.

Our son Paul came down from Canberra 5 weeks ago and has been living with us, providing an all important second person to care for Lois.

Thus to the end of the story. Just before 8AM on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> August, Lois quietly passed on, dying as she had lived her life – with a minimum of fuss. Thankfully she did not suffer, and Paul and I feel blessed that we could be with her during her final minutes.

Of course, the story does not end there, as I have been up till now discussing just the family and work perspectives. They are but one part of every person's life.

Lois's whole life was one of faith, spent as a loyal and loving member of the St Linus Anglican Church community in Merlynston (now Coburg North), from when the family moved to Fawkner in 1951 until now – a continuous 70 years of service.

She took First Communion there, was Confirmed there, was married there, worshipped there every Sunday and on every Feast Day, was on the Church Vestry (from 1974 to 2016), serving as a Church Warden for much of that time. Her life is being celebrated here today and her ashes will eventually be interred here in the Memorial Garden, alongside those of her mother and father. She served as a Synod rep, she served on Encumbency Committees, she coordinated Spring Fairs, you name it and she is sure to have done it at one time or another. She saw priests come and go, but she remained a constant for the community and the church. In this regard, she was one of many - Beryl and Albert, Norma and Ron, Eileen, Beryl, Elizabeth, ... the list is a long one. So many people have tied themselves to this little church and made it a special place for us and our family.

Her commitment to the St Linus Kindergarten was also a lifelong love. Our 4 boys all went to that kinder, David first cab off the rank at the start of 1984 through to Matthew graduating at the end of 1991. Since 1983, Lois has been continuously involved with the kinder, in roles ranging from Committee member to Treasurer to President. Much of the time has been spent as President, and it is true to say that Lois has saved the kinder from shutdown on more than one occasion. Even in her last weeks, she was still talking regularly to Judy, the kinder teacher, and working to pass on her many ongoing tasks and activities to others.

She served as a member of the Archdiocesan Council for Anglican Early Childhood Services from 1996, a recognition of her expertise and experience in that area. She was also selected as part of an Archdiocesan group to visit England in 2001, basing themselves around the Thame area and learning from the vibrant church renewal taking place there at that time. It is true to say she moved in higher circles – any one who mattered in the archdiocese knew Lois!

While in Thame, Lois was billeted with Rosemary, triggering a family friendship that continues even now, with Rosemary visiting us in Australia on 5 occasions and us catching up with her in England a similar number of times.

Lois and I were lucky enough to be able to travel extensively once the boys had flown the nest. Trips to Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, India, Japan, China (3 times), Peru, Brazil, Russia, Western Europe (5 times), Great Britain and Ireland, along with trips to the Olympics in Sydney, Beijing, London and Rio. Our house was known tongue in cheek at 'Hotel Erickson', with the many people who stayed with us here in Melbourne year in and year out, and these trips allowed our paths to cross again and again.

On a personal note, Lois finally felt the need to join a gym around 2010 and started going to the Curves Gym in Essendon 3 mornings per week, before she headed off to work. Yes, she did the exercises, but I think the biggest therapy was the friendship she formed with the other morning ladies. They called themselves 'The Curvettes' and they have been firm friends ever since. When Curves shut down, they moved to another gym in Moonee Ponds. When it shut down, they moved to Windy Hill Gym in Essendon. We used to laugh and suggest that perhaps these gyms were shutting down as a result of a certain disruptive and noisy clientel! 'The Curvettes' have been a loving and wonderful support for Lois over the last few years.

Lois was passionate in her world view which was Labor through and through. Always a supporter of their social agenda, she eventually joined the party in later life to give them further moral support as they continued, in her eyes, to fight the good fight. She was a lifetime supporter of the Carlton Football Club, as was her mother and as is her brother Neil. But we don't hold it against them!

Of course, her family was the most important thing in her life, centred on our boys David, Chris, Paul and Matt, along with our two grand children Oliver and Annika, and including her siblings Neil and Bev, with their spouses Greg and Jill, their children Carla and Tom, Nicole, Renee and Dannii, and her nephews and nieces Nora, Bella, Akasha, Milika, Charlee, Tayla, Ella, Harrison and Emme, and my brothers Terry and Mick and their spouses Diana and Judy, their children Sue, Eric, Tom, Sally, Jack and Andrew and their grand children Terry, Kahlia, Josh, Ella, Archie and Max. She was an integral part of our big and loving family.

In recent years, the absolute joy she experienced with her grand children Oliver and Annika cannot be emphasised enough. The trips to Moonee Ponds on the train, the birthday cakes, the tall stories, the ridiculous goings on, are lasting and wonderful memories for us all.

Lois left her mark, long remembered, everywhere she went. And wherever she went, she formed life long friendships. From her early school and university and teaching days, to Wodonga, to her time in England, to Braemar, to Kangan, to St Linus Church and Kinder, to BCLS and everywhere in between, she leaves loving friends.

Just recently, while attending a funeral in Wodonga, a tall man came up to her, reached down to put his hands on her shoulders and said " *Miss Kimpton, you were the best teacher I ever had!* "

They say our friends are a reflection of ourselves. That Lois's friends are all such wonderful people says so much about Lois herself. She has lived her life for others, been so much to others, meant so much to others, offered such support to others. She characterises what it is to be truly Christian.

We will miss her so much. We will miss her happy smile, her cheeky repartee, her quirky sense of humour, her love and interest in everyone and everything.

Rest in peace, Lois.