

Saying goodbye to mum is not easy, she was my mother, one of my closest friends, my housemate, my opponent, an example for how to be better, and so much more.

Growing up mum always had a love of animals and was always getting her dad to bring home injured animals, and healthy ones. He always "took them to get help" which made mum feel better. One day she even made granddad bring home a frilled neck lizard she had managed to catch. Of course it was not happy about the situation, and after mum realised that it had to go back into the wild, mum made him drive an hour back to where she found it.

When she was a little older, she had no interest in school, only the riding school. Horses became her passion and her life as a young teenager. She would ride her bike out to the stables during her lunch break, to spend a few minutes with the animals, before riding back to school. After school she was right back down there. She was even friends with the milk man (for the young ones - they used to deliver milk to your door in the old days!) because he used a horse and cart.

Janice left school when she was 15 and begun a hairdressing apprenticeship. She really enjoyed the experience and learned a lot, as it covered a lot of what today we call the beauty school. She was rather proud of how much she knew about the subject. And she was always learning more.

Mum and dad married, and before too long I came along, and mum started her second and main career as a mum and a home maker. She loved cooking and sewing, and enjoyed making clothes for us. It was the 70s, and I always remember the very trendy denim blue jacket with the big, bright red buttons down the front, that I wore to a wedding.

Mum put a lot of effort into each meal, carefully prepared, well presented, and most importantly tasted great. She loved going to a restaurant and tasting a good meal, then going home and recreating it from memory and her ability to pick out flavours and ingredients.

As a kid, for our birthdays, mum would make some very impressive cakes. She tried so hard to give us a good celebration. One year on my birthday, no one had shown up, so she ran around the block getting kids to come

over so I would not be disappointed. It must have worked, because I had no idea until she told me a few years ago.

We moved a lot while growing up, and each new house was a challenge to fix, improve, and beautify. Some houses were already nice, while others had most people turning away at the state of them. To mum it was something to conquer. Once each house was cleaned and improved, my parents started to get the itch to move to a new place and a new challenge. But, mum made each place a home. A warm, inviting, friendly space that we appreciated and enjoyed.

Mum and dad separated in the early 90s. She was able to enjoy the partying and fun that she felt she missed out on when she started a family young. Unfortunately it also led to some difficult situations and relationships. She got Babe, a staffy, her best friend and rock during those turbulent times.

But, she recognised her situation was not healthy, and got herself out of those behaviours and environments. She moved back to Adelaide and settled down in her dad's old unit in North Plympton. It was a small place, but it was stable, in a nice location, safe, and close to her dad.

Babe passed away, which was incredibly hard for her, and she never stopped missing her puppy. But she found Buffy a little later, and the two of them became inseparable.

Being close to her family, and her dad in particular was very important to her after feeling like she missed out on some of her mum's final years. Visiting and helping her dad with day to day things, became something she looked forward to. They got to talk more, learn and understand each other better, and just share some good food. Indian became a regular favourite.

Later, Mum got a housing trust house with enough room for Brett. Fortunately there was room for me too when I had to move from Townsville. Brett came and went, living with us for awhile. Mum was happy, she had both of her boys at home. I asked her about it, and she said it was because she knew what we were up to, and whether she needed to worry or not, as opposed to just worrying.

Mum was always decorating and making improvements to our home. All the little touches and details she puts around the home give it life,

brightness, and character. Everywhere I look I see all of the thoughtful touches.

Mum loved gardening and being out in the sun. She made the garden beautiful and was always tending to it (which is proving a very hard act to follow – the poor garden!). She would befriend magpies and get them coming at her call and eating out of her hand. Even our cat Moochy was a stray who decided she was the right choice, and also had no fear of Buffy.

When mum developed lung cancer before christmas 2020, it was a shock, but she took it in stride. Even when she lost her hair, she shrugged it off (literally sometimes!). She grew to like her new trendy short haired look. Given how she loved doing her hair, I was surprised and proud.

The sudden downturn in her health was a big shock, given how her last scan showed she was cancer free. She was all set to get her health on track, exercise, and had even booked a holiday house right on the beach for early 2022.

Her final days were difficult for her, as she had always had a fear of suffocating, but despite each breath taking effort, she still smiled and made jokes, playfully flirted with doctors. She said she was now old enough to get away with it. We had some good conversations and she said some things that I will always hold dear.

Even in the middle of all that she was going through, she still cared and thought of others. Mum had ordered coloured face masks to brighten up the nurses. She was checking that I was still eating okay, and getting friends to check on me.

She had lots of calls and visits from friends and family, and that made all the difference to her.

I am so grateful for these last 4 years together, in spite of or maybe even partly because of the arguments we were fortunate enough to have. We had some doozies too! But when mum was laying in the hospital bed, none of that mattered and what was important became a lot clearer.

I am glad that she did not suffer long or with too much pain, but I am forever grateful for having had her as my mum and friend. She has made

my life brighter, more imaginative, and much richer for having been part of her life.

She loved to enjoy the sun for some time each day, so, when I soak up the sun Ill think of her. When I have a good meal, spend time with animals, put on a bright colour, go fishing, and so many other little things, Ill think of her, miss her, but most of all, remember the love we shared.