

Robin Gardner

Born at Lakemba on 20 May 1943 and a product of Birrong Girls High, Robin Anne Gardner was first involved with Petersham-Marrickville DCC as a scorer in the 1966-67 season for her fiancé Stuart Gardner's 2nd Grade team. Soon after, she stepped up to be 1st Grade scorer following Stuart's selection in that side. And when the team played at Petersham Oval, Robin willingly served afternoon tea to cricketers, officials and supporters assisting regulars Pat Hughes and Helen Milford in the canteen. That was the beginning of a hospitality team the likes of which has rarely been found in Sydney Grade or NSW Premier Cricket.

Robin and Stuart were married in 1968 and had a happy life together bringing up three children. However, tragedy struck in 1994 when the popular spin bowler lost his life to cancer aged just 52. Notwithstanding the great sorrow she suffered, Robin continued to serve in the Petersham Oval canteen each Saturday. Her passion and commitment for the club continued unabated displaying her undying support and devotion. A true cricket lover, Robin took as much interest in the club, the teams and the individual players as any cricket tragic.



Over the years they served in the canteen together, Robin, Pat and Helen developed a reputation for cricket hospitality second to none. Afternoon tea at Petersham Oval was more an event than a brief adjournment in play. Cricketers and officials all over Sydney looked forward to a clash with Petes on their home ground not just because of the fierce competition likely to be experienced on the field, but for the tasty goodies they received off the field!

In the year 2000, Robin joined Pat Hughes and Helen Milford as a Life Member of Petersham-Marrickville DCC. That same year she received a well-deserved honour when the Governor-General awarded her the Australian Sports Medal.

The merger in 2001 with Randwick to form Randwick Petersham CC did not dampen Robin's enthusiasm nor that of Pat and Helen with each of them continuing to provide the same exceptional service for which they had become renowned.

The contribution of the three canteen ladies was recognised at the SCA Premier's Dinner in 2002 when a presentation on stage to each of them was met with a standing ovation from the 700 in attendance. Rarely had such a contribution to cricket by volunteers received such recognition. It was a humbling moment for the ladies and a proud moment for Randwick Petersham Cricket.

Helen was the first of the trio to retire, standing down in 2005 followed by Pat in 2008. However, Robin continued to serve, not just at Petersham Oval but at the club's other 1st Grade venue, Coogee Oval. With longer playing hours introduced, Robin answered the call and dedicated almost a full day to the cause, arriving early at the ground while being one of the last to leave.

In 2006, Robin was named Randwick Petersham Clubman of the Year in the non-playing category while in 2009-10 she was awarded the club's most prestigious trophy—the Ernie Toshack Memorial Award for outstanding service to the club and to the game of cricket. Within a few months of that award she was presented with Cricket Australia's 50 Years Service to Cricket Medal.

Always willing to help and assist in any way for the benefit of the club, Robin took on a further commitment in 2015 when she became part of Randwick Petersham's formal administration by joining the Management Committee. Later that season Robin was honoured by the attendance of a great number of members and supporters at a day's play in a 1st Grade match at Petersham Oval named "Robin Gardner Day". And in 2019 a club Community Spirit Award was introduced named in her honour jointly with Club Historian Lyall Gardner. She is also Patron of the club, jointly with Alan Turner.

Robin's contribution, firstly to Petersham-Marrickville and since then to Randwick Petersham, has been simply outstanding. To work as a hospitality volunteer for a cricket club for well over half a century, turning up week in week out with a smile on her face to serve hungry and thirsty cricketers and supporters, takes a very special person. Robin Gardner is a very special person.