

Celebrating 60



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Dear Dad

You were born Robert James Stevens on 1 September 1947, but to us, you will always be Dad.

And not just any dad. We all think you're the best Dad in the world.

The following pages celebrate your life in pictures, and although I could only fit my favourites, even this small, edited collection illustrates the rich and rewarding existence you've enjoyed for the past 60 years.

We all love you and hope this book brings you many smiles, a lot of laughter and perhaps even a sentimental tear or two.

It's been a pleasure compiling the content and I hope it serves as a fitting commemoration of your 60th year.

Happy browsing!

Love Claire



mOmento

PREVIEW

Jim & Jessie

Bottom left:

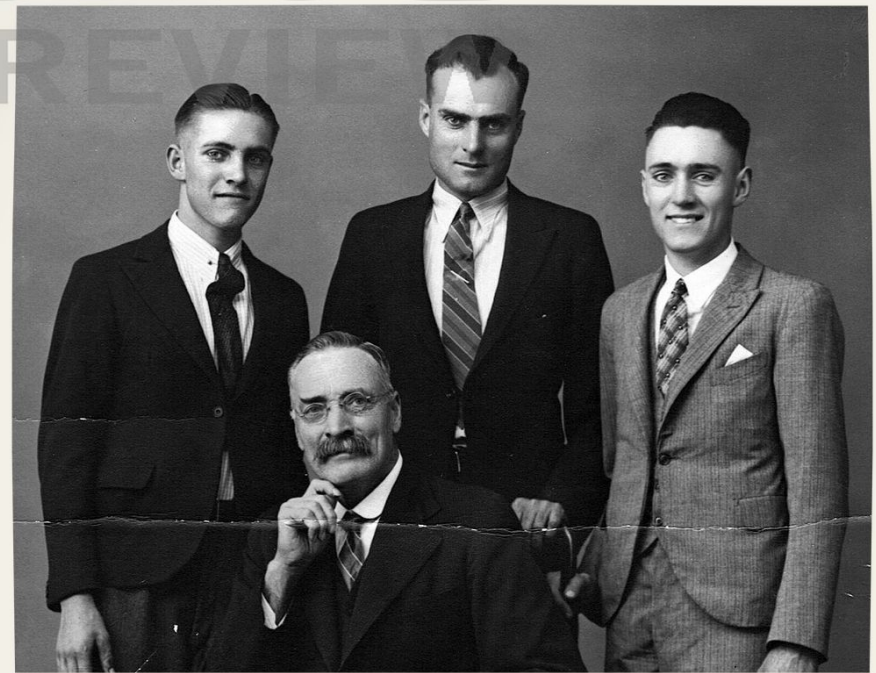
The "first three of seven"
Nancy, Jess and Dad's Dad,
Alan Stevens - 1907.

Bottom right:

James "Pom Pom" Stevens with sons
Ted, Alan and Dave - 1935.

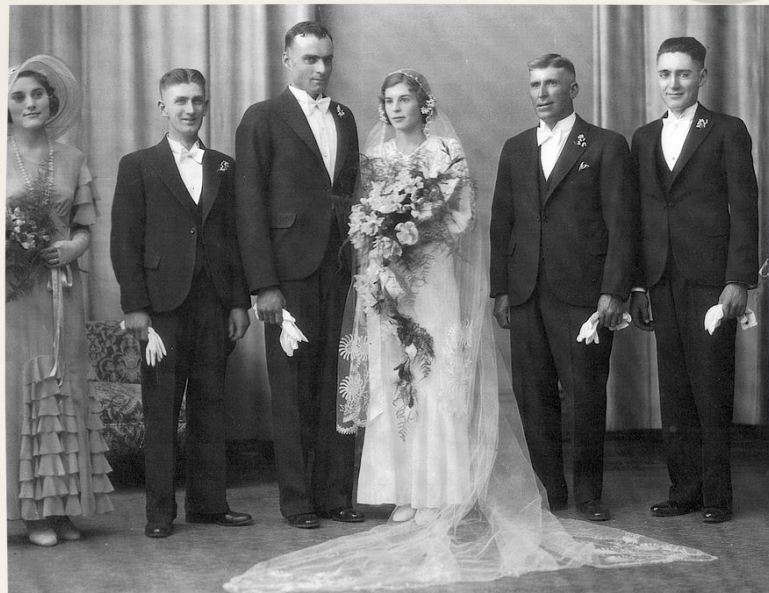
Jim and Jessie were married in the Anglican Church in Kalgoorlie and lived for 19 years in a small house on a mining lease where Jim worked as a "winder" driver.

The house was hand-built and accommodated the seven children and their parents. According to Dad's Aunt Nancy: "All of us were born in that house and we were a close and affectionate family. Ours was a very active kitchen. My father would be playing his records on one end of the table and Mum ironing on another part. Someone would be folding nappies while I was doing homework and Jess using the hand sewing machine in another part of the room. In the daytime the baby was always bathed in front of the old wood stove and while Mum fed whoever was the baby at the time, she would sing the old hymns or recite poems she had learned at school."



Dad's parents - Alan & Doris

Alan was the second of seven children, and according to older sister Nancy: "He was a joy for my parents for they wanted a boy. He grew to be a fine big man and was in the RAAF in World War II. I am told that when I first saw him I said 'Frow him in the corner' - so it seems I resented him taking my place."

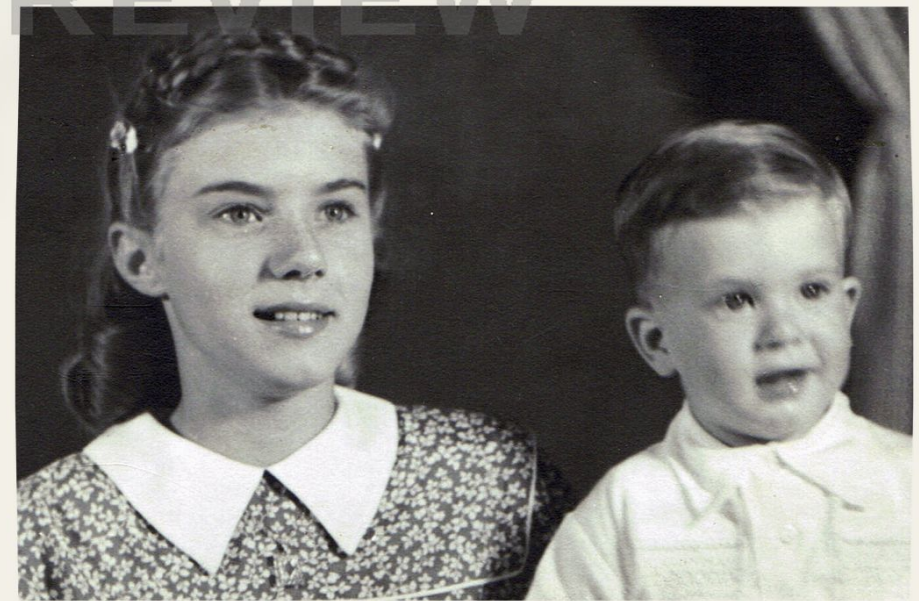


The Stevens family

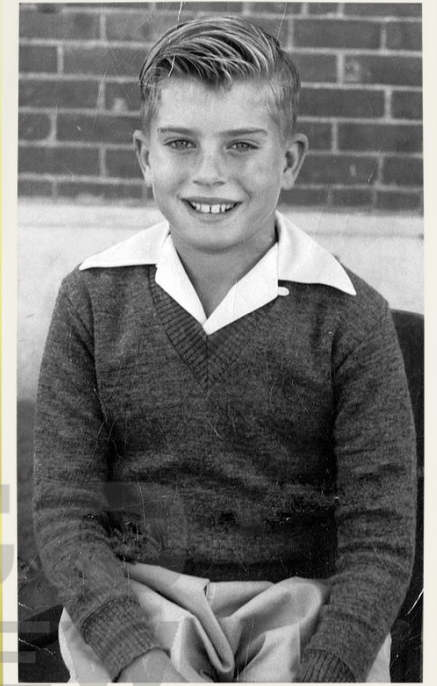
Dad's sister Jan (one of our favourite Aunties) was born before the war - 11 years earlier than Dad.

Despite the age difference, they remain good friends to this day.

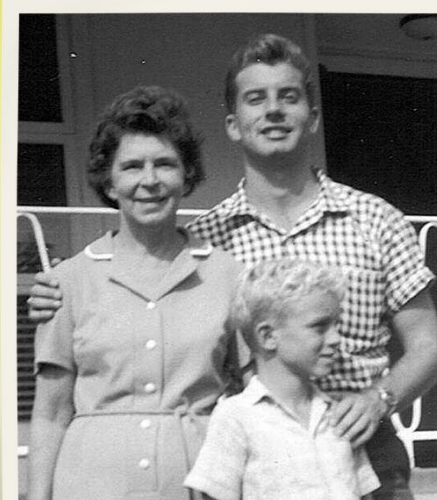
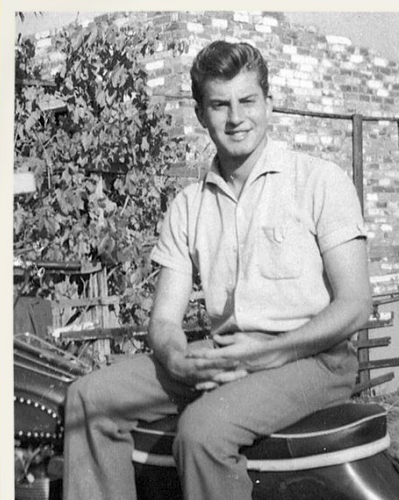
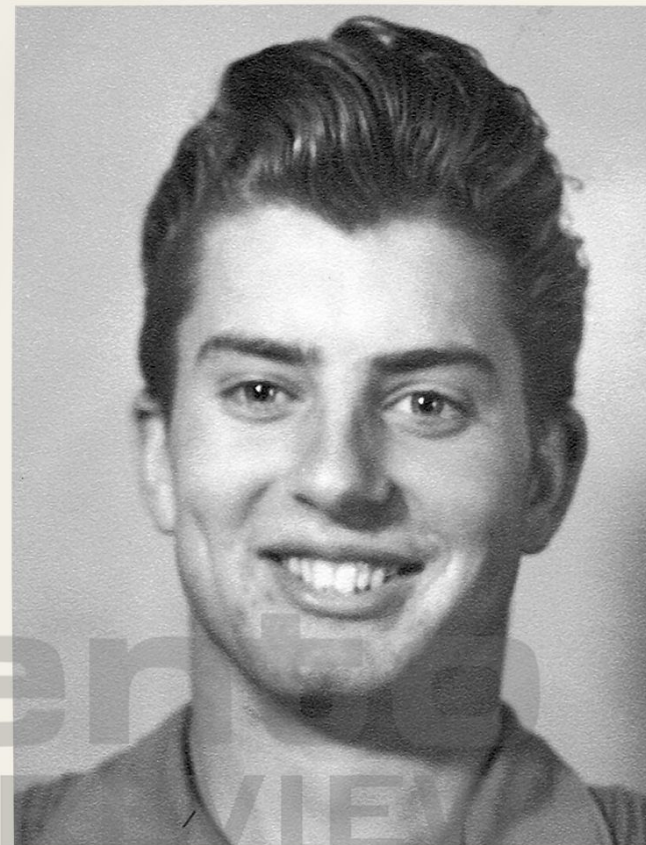
It was Jan who taught Dad about the "birds and the bees" and he tells us she was a bit of a stunner and never in short supply of male suitors. By the looks of these photos (and those that follow) she was a kind and attentive older sister - and goodness gracious, isn't Dad a cutie!



The first two women in Dad's life



Getting better with age...



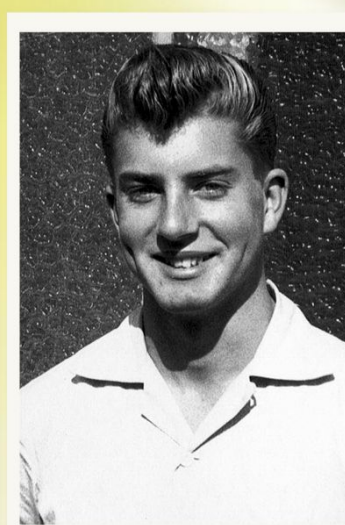
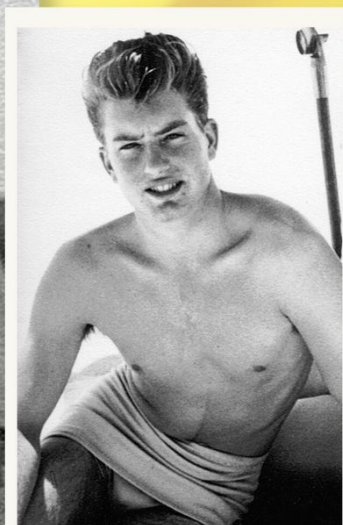


Don't hate me because my hair is fabulous!

It seems that Dad has always been - and remains to this day - proud of his hair. And who wouldn't be! A more thick and finely sculpted thatch you're unlikely to ever see.

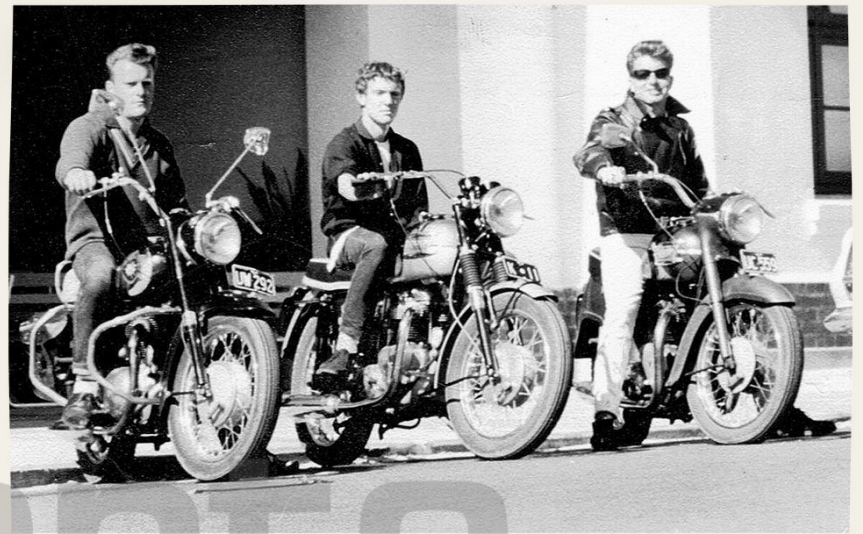
These days he's more "Silver Fox" than "Rebel Without a Cause", but he's quick to point out that his head is still full, although a little peppered, and he rarely travels without a can of hairspray.

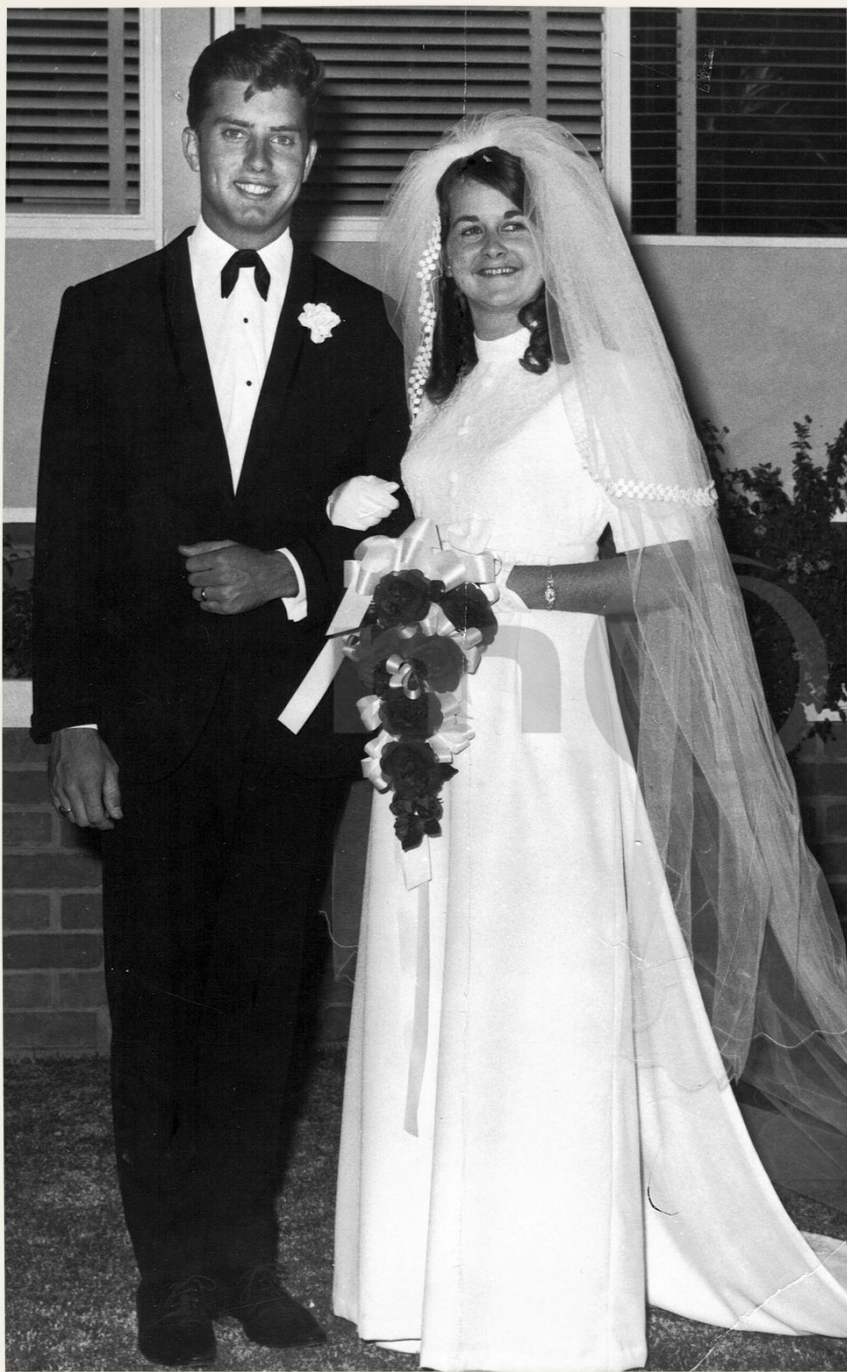
I must also say something about the "man skirt" he's sporting in the photo below. He swears that "all the guys wore them to the beach" but Dad, in my 34 years of living, I'm yet to see evidence of such a claim. They are truly hideous and I can only hope that their season was short-lived.





Born to be wild

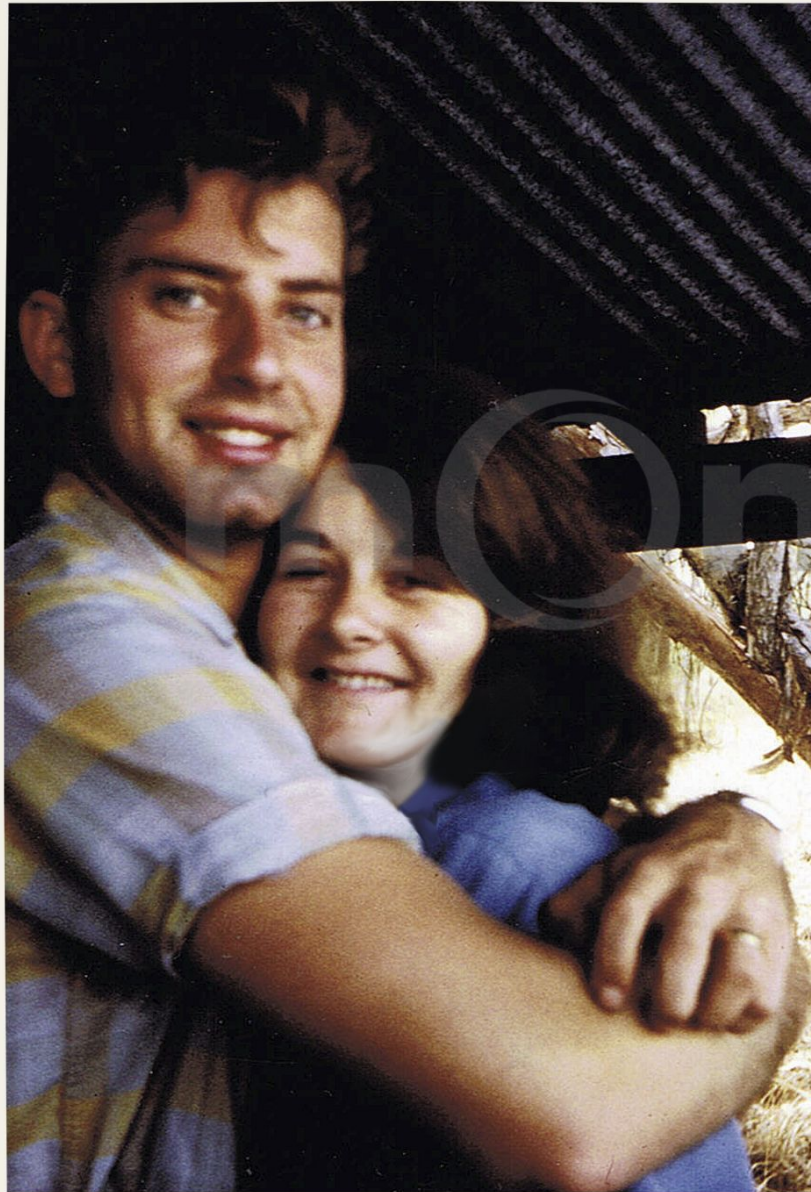




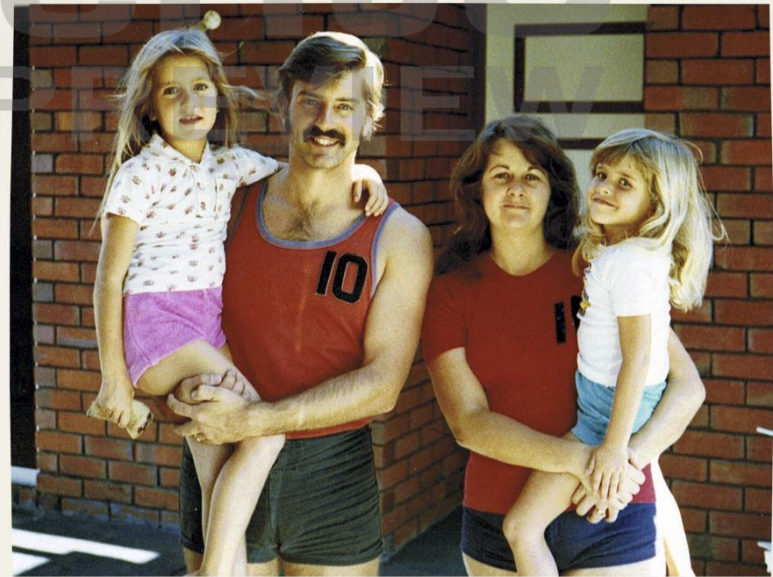
Never mind the nose!



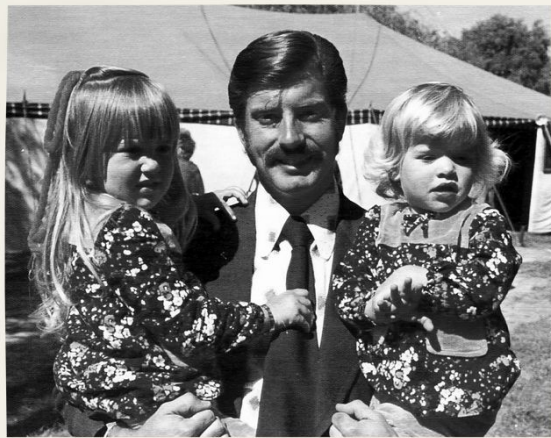
Married & mellowing



The first two of four - Tammy & Claire



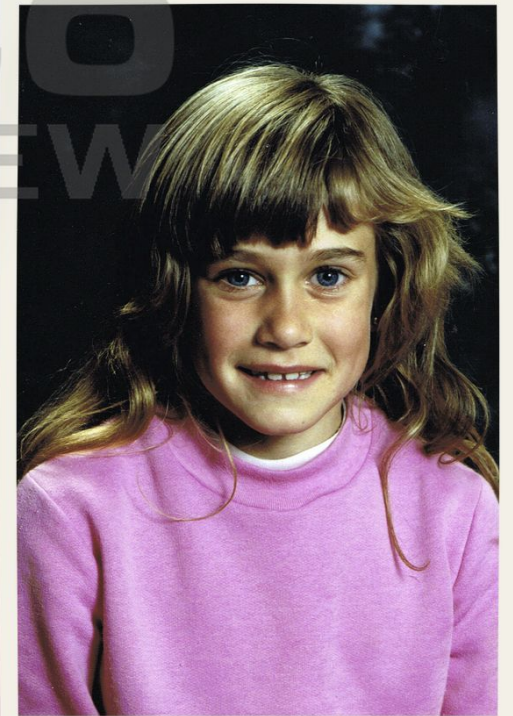
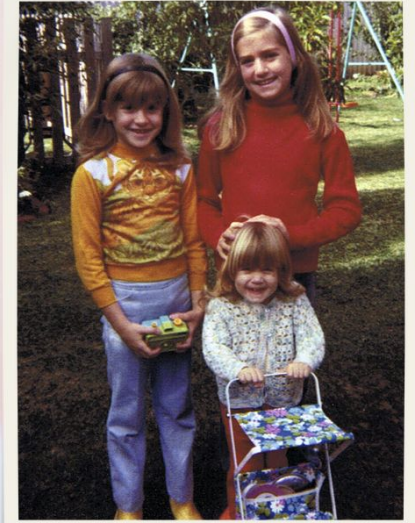
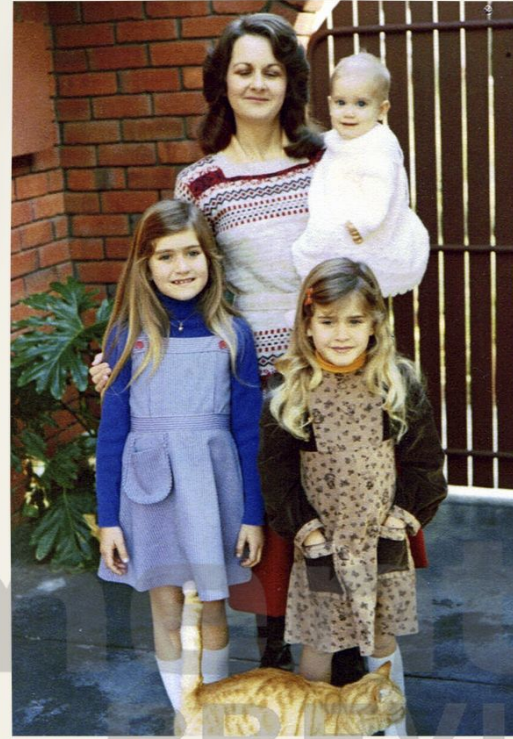
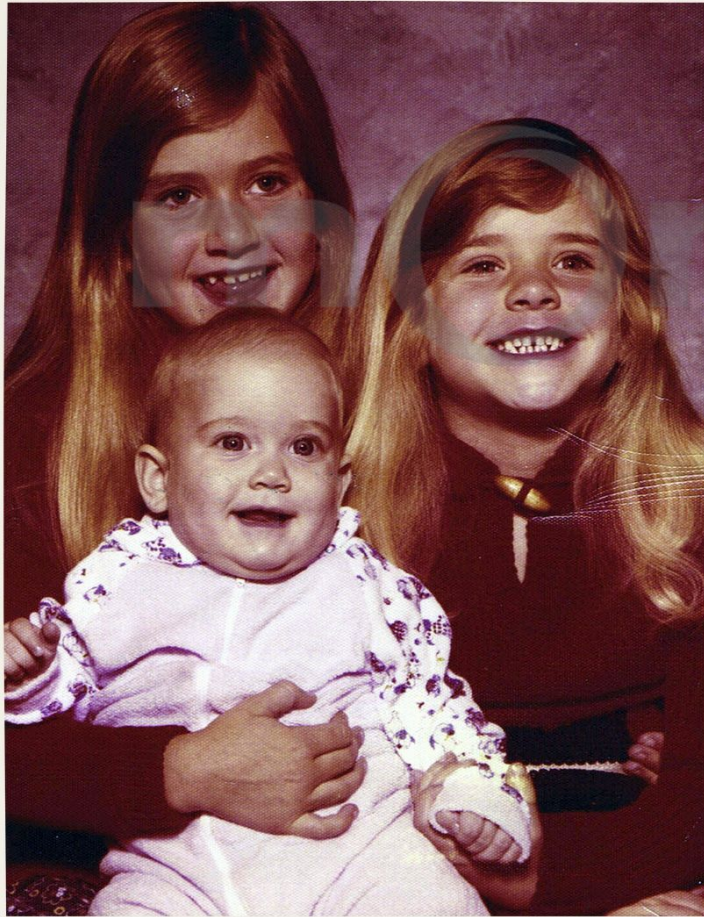
The young family



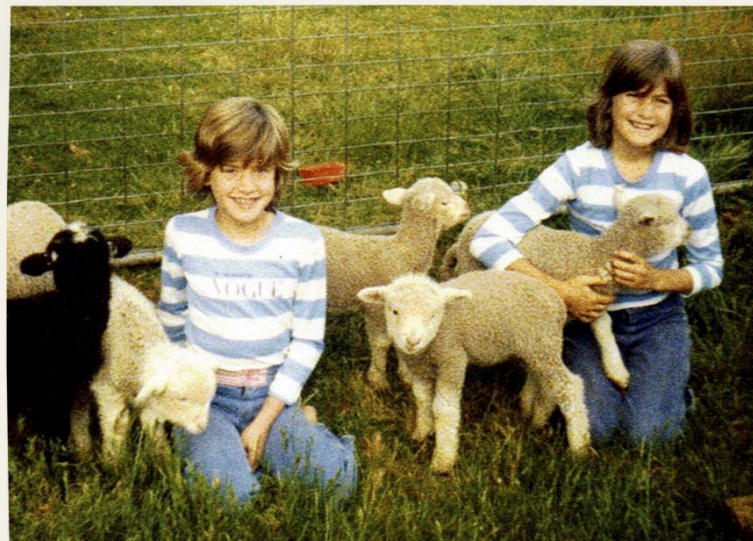
Two beautiful girls



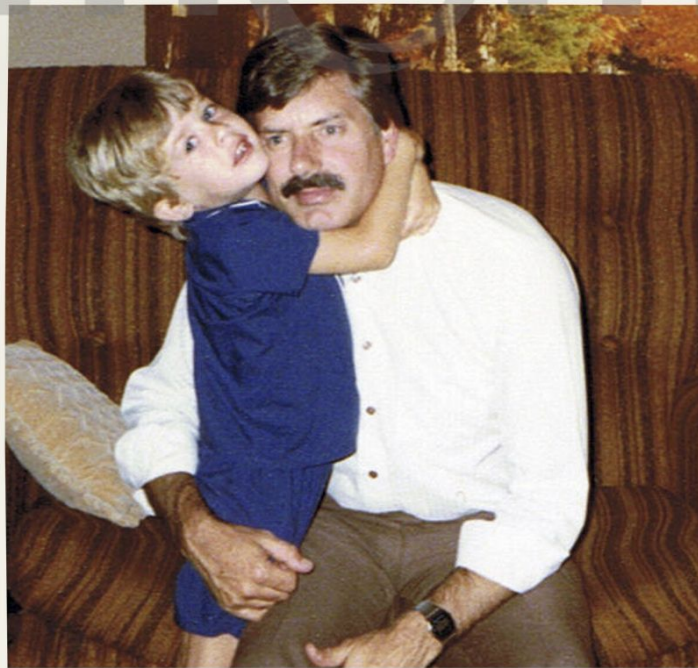
...and Lydi makes three



Living in the 70s

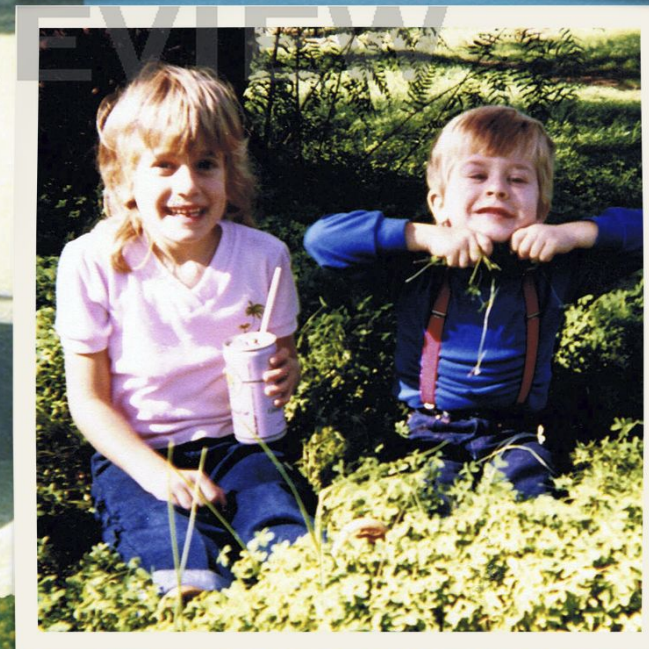


...and a boy makes four!



Holidays & Picnics

This happy family snap was taken on holiday at Ledge Point in March 1988 - although this shot was actually taken at Lancelin's famous sand dunes. It was so windy - even with sunglasses I could hardly open my eyes without being sandblasted by the stiff sea breeze. Poor old Lydi and Grant look to be having a particularly good time. It was on this holiday that Mum and I watched in horror as a grey fin sliced through the water towards Dad, Tam and Lyd who were playing happily in the ocean. We leaped to our feet and screamed "shark! shark!" - certain that we were about to watch our loved ones dismembered in the jaws of a White Pointer. Needless to say, our antics caught everyone's attention - both on the beach and in the water - and we felt more than a little sheepish when a spritely young dolphin burst from the waves instead of the shark we'd expected.





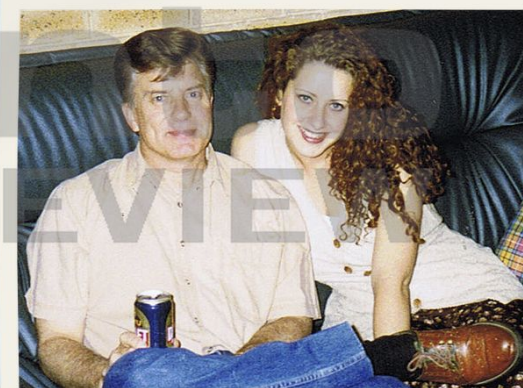
The 80s!

Dad is straight from the set of "Miami Vice", Tammy's tresses are in the dying throes of a perm, Grant looks like a ventriloquist dummy, Lyd actually looks quite lovely (if you overlook the white shoes and stockings), I'm sporting a short, fluffy fringe and Mum is wrapped in a peach and purple polka dot suit with padded shoulders. Every family has an awkward stage - I guess this was ours.





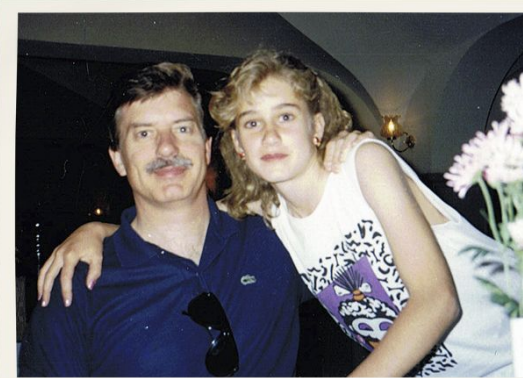
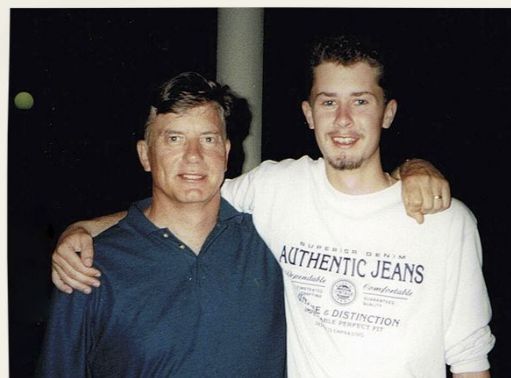
Us & Dad



Above

This family portrait was taken back in the days of the tall fringe, thick eyebrows and all things polka dot. I'm 17, Tam is 19, Lyd is 13, Grant is 9 or 10 and Dad was still in denial about his moustache turning silver.

This shot was snapped at the Myer portait centre and they used it as their official promotional photo for the next year which was highly embarrassing. All our friends saw it hanging on the shop wall and it was the butt of many jokes among the guys in my Year 12 Human Biology class who used to ask if I'd be starring in "The Waltons" any time soon.





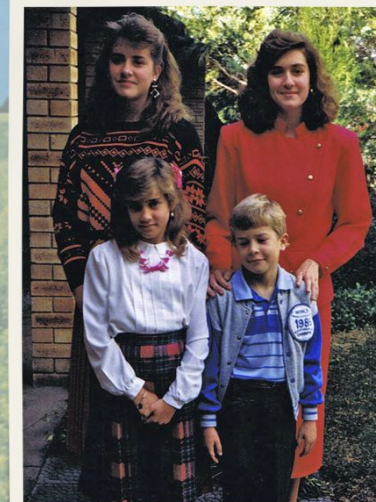
Good times with the family



All but one of these photos was taken on the Sabbath - sunset Friday to sunset Saturday. It was reserved as special family time, which we all really enjoyed.

Some of my favourite childhood memories include the family Friday night dinners in the formal lounge and dining room, with pre-dinner snacks, roast chicken, white wine and chocolate as an after-dinner treat.

I would always head home from school with a spring in my step on Friday afternoons, happy to find Mum at work in the kitchen with her favourite Alabama CD on the HiFi (she's a country fan from way back) and the house filled with the heady aroma of succulent roast meat. We'd each clean our room from top to bottom then dress for dinner and wait in the formal lounge beside the finely set table and tempting pre-dinner snacks for Dad to arrive home from work.

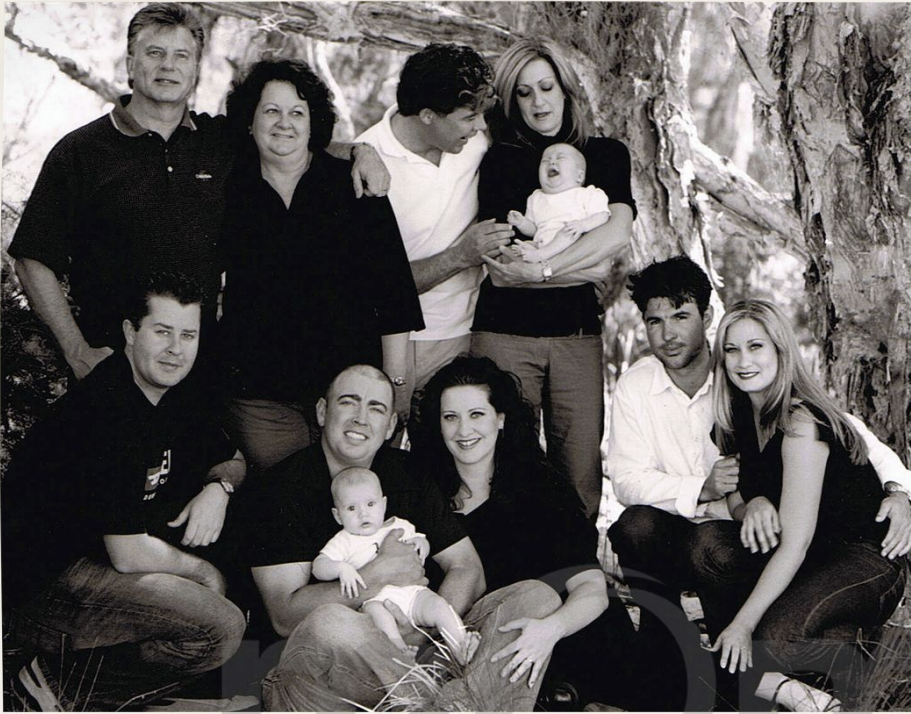


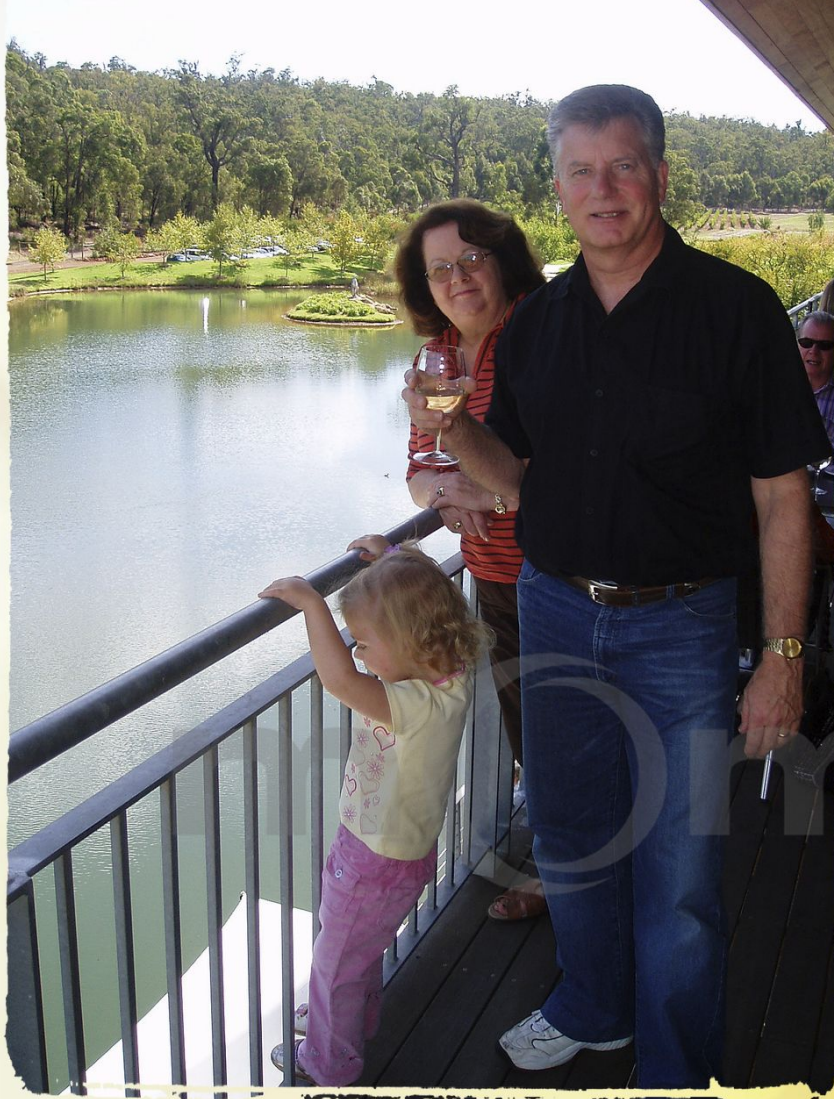


Daddy's girls



Family snaps





A few of my favourite things

Dad enjoys water-side dining, spending time with us - his adoring children, family holidays, reading the weekend newspaper from start to finish, Foxtel's history channel, chocolate covered peanuts and anything to do with the West Coast Eagles.



Grandkids!

Mum and Dad will tell you it was a long time coming, but since having decided to spawn, both Tam and I have each produced two children in quick succession.

I've even got another on the way. He's kicking and hiccupping as I type.

Dad has often told me that he loves his grandkids as much as he loves us. And I believe him. Both he and Mum are wonderful grandparents and our kids our lucky to have them.

Dad has already regaled Grace and Tyler with stories of eagles and rabbits which they repeatedly request each time they sleep over, and Jessie will tell anyone who'll listen how much she loves Pappa.

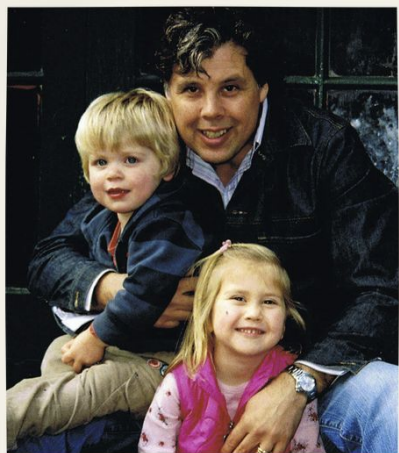
As the only grandson at this point in time, Dad has a special place in his heart for young Callum - who just happens to look a little like him - and I know he's looking forward to the new arrival in February (another boy!).

*Claire's girls
Tyler & Jessie*





Tam's brood - Grace & Callum



Good times with the Grandkids



My Love

The first time I laid eyes on you My Love, was when Lindsay was pointing out your rather large nose. Unfortunately for him, the photo also showed your rather well-defend torso and you know the rest...

I have been asked to write something of our life together. After that Feast we stayed in contact to when we eventually couldn't stand being apart any longer, so I moved to Perth to be with you. We had a wonderful summer and eventually got engaged, which lasted for six weeks then we married in Melbourne. It was a funny wedding. All of my family were in the bridal party.

We travelled back to Perth on the Indian Pacific and I remember how we tried to pretend we'd been married for a while, but I think they guessed as we couldn't keep our hands off each other. We also weren't really that interested in going to the food carriage for all the food that was on offer.

We have had so many happy times together. I was definitely lucky enough to marry my soul mate and best friend.

Remember we were so excited about getting our first home and buying all that second-hand furniture. We set it all up and then started a love of entertaining. We got our first kitten, and tried to train it but it was a lost cause, so we thought producing babies was a better option.

We moved to Morley where our first beautiful baby girl was born. You had to sleep in the room next to me the first night as I had her at home and the midwife insisted. Remember that first night as new parents we laid in our respective rooms and heard our baby girl cry for the first time. I remember the love I felt for you both that night.

Remember our first holiday as a family in Albany.

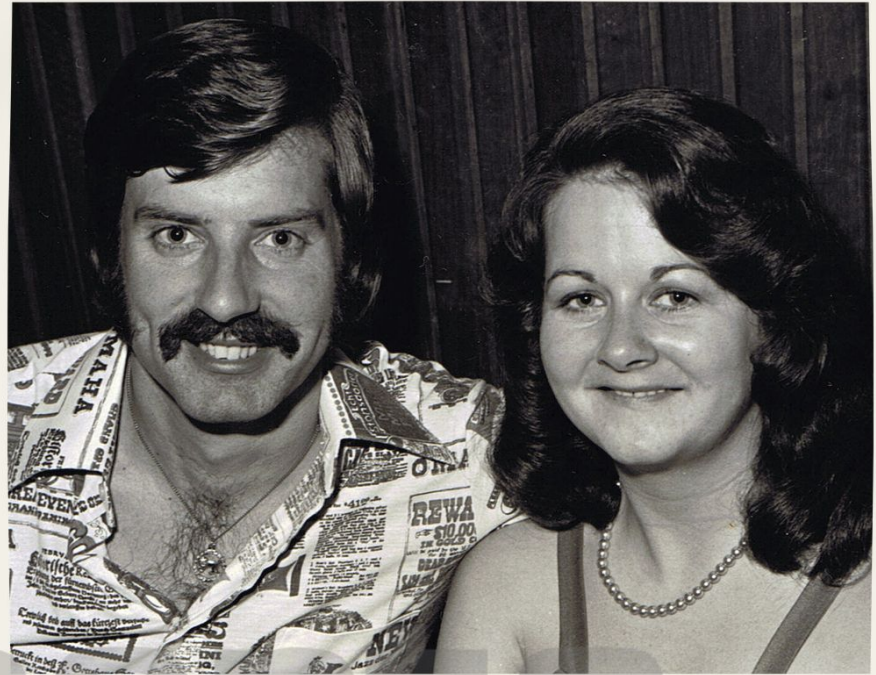
We eventually moved to a larger house and Claire, Lyd and Grant were born. Our family was complete: three beautiful girls and one lovely son.

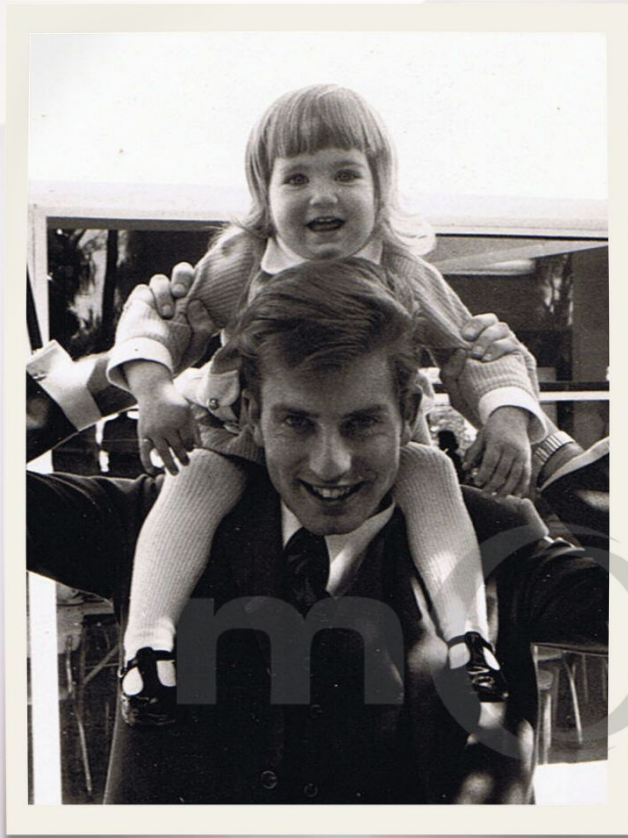
Over the years we have done so much together: been overseas and over east; built homes; raised children; laughed together and cried together; worried together and planned together. But through it all My Love we have been together - through the good times and not so good times.

Life to me is a big tapestry with many threads and some pretty big knots, but I think we have made a darn pretty good tapestry together. We are on the threads that are our grandchildren, so this part will have many cohesive threads and some knots no doubt. Then we will enter our final making of that tapestry - our aging together which will complete the tapestry of our life.

To have been your wife all my married life has been a joy. I love you with all my heart. Enjoy this book of your life My Love.

Love always your Cas





Dear Dad

I'm sure that on reaching a milestone as significant as your 60th birthday you have paused to reflect on your life to date - the highs and lows, achievements and losses. Your birthday has also prompted me to stop and reflect on the 36 years you have been my Dad and what that means to me.

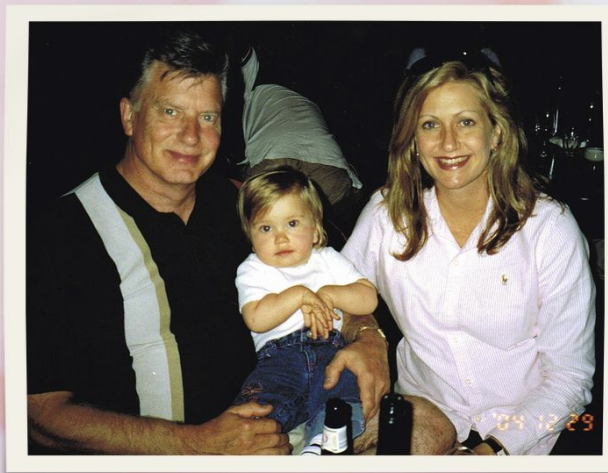
From the outset, your commitment to Fatherhood has been absolute and generous. Whether it be the hours spent rocking me to sleep as a baby, helping with homework assignments, administering repairs to the hepatitis yellow Falcon or caring for Grace and Callum, you have always been there whenever, and in whatever circumstance, I needed you.

When I consider my life now - my interests, personality and paths I have chosen, I realise how greatly you have influenced who I am today. My long and abiding interest in history, minerals industry career, singing capability and enjoyment of people, can largely be credited to you. You have been first and foremost, my role model and supporter.

Now, as a parent, I truly appreciate how total and loving your fathering has been, for it is not until you become a parent that you genuinely understand the depth of sacrifice, unselfishness and love a parent gives their children. I now fully understand and thank you 60 times over for being the inspirational Father I've always known.

Happy Birthday Dad.
I love you.

Tam





The best Dad in the world

From as far back as I can remember, I've always known that my Dad was the best in the world. Other kids will tell you their Dad is the strongest, or the tallest, but my Dad was simply the best.

He told the best stories, especially the one about the giant arm that reached from the painting on the lounge room wall and scooped me and Tammy into the little boat that bobbed at the river's edge. Each time we boarded the vessel we were swept away to a different place, where the sky was purple or the trees were made of chocolate, always to return just in time for dinner. As long as we took turns tickling his arm or freckled back with a toothpick he was happy enough to entertain us with his special brand of children's oratory.

He was the best teacher. Through stories and general conversation he'd teach us about history, biology, astronomy and geography. He explained that Mars was the red planet, that typhoid killed hundreds of early settlers and how our bodies fight sickness with fever. He taught me about Hitler, the first gold discovery in his home town of Kalgoorlie, and the Tropics - a mystical place where it was always hot and mosquitoes spread malaria.

He drew the best pictures. I used to love going to Auntie Jan's for dinner because Cameron had one of Dad's paintings hanging in his bedroom - a space scene featuring two astronauts on a red and purple planet. I loved it and begged Cameron to let me take it, which he finally did many years later. I'm not sure where the painting is now.

He gave the best shoulder rides and dizzy-wizzies and let my ride on his back at the swimming pool. I'd lock my little arms around his neck and pretend I was a crocodile as we'd glide through the water.

He was the best looking of all the dads I knew, a fact that was confirmed by Leanne Peck - one of my Grade 3 companions - who told everyone at school: "Claire's Dad is a spunk. He looks like Elvis!"

He wore the best leather jacket to Wednesday night bible studies that squeaked with each scripture he sought as I'd rest my tired little head against his arm and search his pocket for lifesavers.

He was the best singer. One of my earliest memories of Dad performing is at the Albany Town Hall. He was singing the Kenny Rogers classic "She Believes in Me" - albeit in a Tom Jones sort of style. I watched from the audience as Dad took the stage in a creamy satin shirt and gold medallion and wondered if my friends were jealous their dads couldn't sing. I'd heard Rob Stewart try and even to my young, untrained ears, it was absolutely hideous.

He was always there, especially in times of sickness. It was Dad who'd feel our foreheads, monitor our pulse and administer medication.

He knew everything. I rarely needed to consult an encyclopedia to complete class assignments. It was simply a matter of asking Dad. We'd sit at the kitchen table after dinner and he'd help me construct an essay while I tickled his arm with a toothpick. He'd always ensure I knew what a word meant before using it - like debilitating, unmitigated, scurrilous and rancor - which must have seemed quite an impressive vocabulary to my Year 8 teachers!

He was forgiving and merciful. When it came time for "a belting" as we called it back then, it was quite easy to convince Dad that it really wasn't necessary, or at least to reduce

the severity of the sentence. Mum on the other hand would rarely relent, so we always hoped it was Dad that doled out the punishment!

He was reliable. When I finished my weekly shift at McDonalds at midnight every Thursday, Dad would be waiting in the orange Falcon just outside the front door. He never complained about the lateness or the frequency. He just did it.

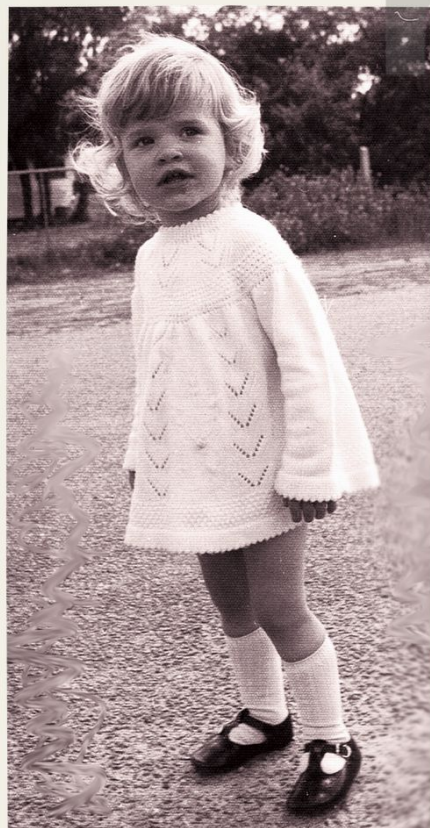
When Tam and I got ourselves a paper round on a Tuesday afternoon, Dad would get home from work early to drive us and our cargo through the suburban streets. On occasions when one of us was ill or absent, Dad would fill in for the week to ensure we kept our route. We earned a grand total of \$22.00 a week for our efforts, which we split between us.

He was cool. All my friends liked him. I was never embarrassed of him (except that one time he picked me up from school in a maroon velour cardigan and track pants tucked into ugg boots) and always admired his ability to converse meaningfully with anyone - be it a taxi driver or chief executive.

He is still the best Dad in the world. And I can say that with confidence having met a few in my travels. In fact, it probably wasn't until I lived abroad for three and a half years that I came to truly appreciate the gift of good family, and the man my Father is. He's also a fabulous Grandfather and Father-in-law, and we're all very lucky to have him.

Dad - thank you for your support, guidance and love over the past 35 years. It may not have always seemed so, but you are one of the great inspirations in my life and I wouldn't be what I am today if it weren't for you and Mum and the life you've given me.

Happy 60th! Love Claire.





To My Dad

What does a daughter say to her Dad to let him know that she thinks he is simply the greatest Dad in the world?

He was the Dad I went to in the middle of the night when I was just five years old and the pain from my throbbing broken arm had woken me up. He was the one who always got up, gave me liquid Panadol (or perhaps it was port - either way it seemed to work well) and put me back to bed.

He was the one who morphed into the E monster at any opportunity and chased me and Grant around the house chanting EEEEEEEEE. Our squeals of delight (which were admittedly tinged with slight terror as we wondered if Dad really had changed into the E monster for good) only increased when he finally caught us, hurled us onto a beanbag, threw another on top and squashed us in between in a beanbag sandwich.

He was also the Dad who told the most amazing bedtime stories about the adventures of the Famous Five and Secret Seven, making sure that he always weaved us, our friends and our dog into the stories. They were so good that when he finished we begged him to stay and tell another and another. Then, when story time was over, he was the one who tucked me into bed so tightly I couldn't move my legs and my arms were pinned at my sides.

When I got a little older and started venturing out into the big wide world, he was the Dad who had the sleepless nights until I arrived home after a big night out. I always knew that no matter what time I rolled in, whether midnight or 4.30am, he would be awake to ask me if I had locked the gate and the door before wishing me goodnight and finally getting some sleep.

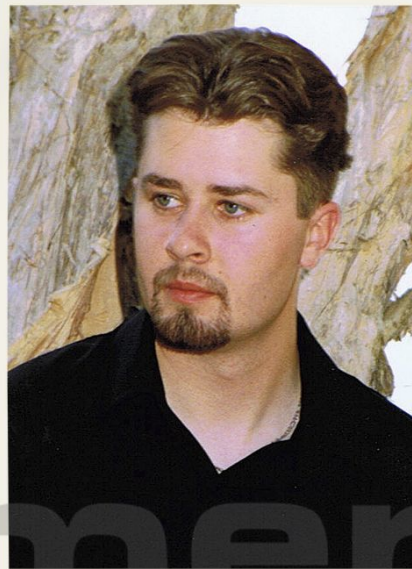
And even now, when I am an adult in my own right and no longer a child under his roof, he is still the one that I call when I need advice, help or assistance. Nothing is too much trouble for my dad, except that one time when he declined my request to come over and kill an enormous Huntsman spider perched above my sliding door - apparently even he has limits.

He has come to my rescue on numerous occasions to pick me up, drop me off, deliver me here and take me there. He has changed tap washers, given advice about every manner of thing and no matter how busy he is, will always stop and take the time to assess the question and give a considered response.

He is special. He is unique. He is still by far the smartest man I know, and aside from my wonderful husband, he is the most important man in my life.

Dad - on your 60th birthday - thank you. Thank you for being my Dad and for taking on the role with gusto. You are, and will always remain, quite simply the greatest Dad in the world.

Love Lyd



Dad

Happy 60th Dad.

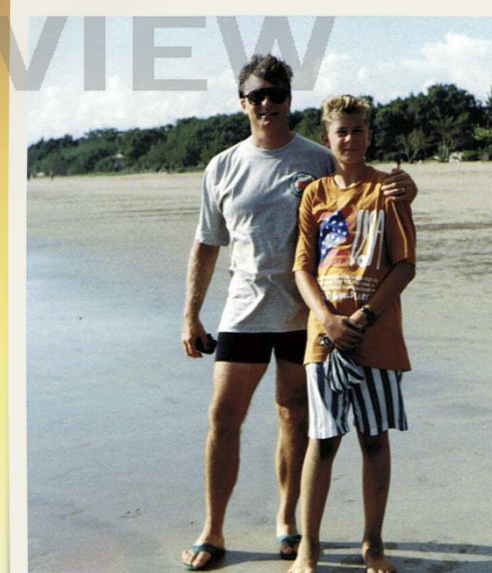
Thanks for all your support and guidance through the years.

You're a great Dad and a good friend.

I know that I can always count on you no matter what, and you're always there with help and advice when I need it.

I wish you and Mum many more happy years together.

Love always, Grant





My most Dear and Wonderful Bob Stevens

Now nigh on 60 (if you aren't already) I would like to simply bring a message of cheer and goodwill. Maybe in Yorkshire terms a right big Eeeee Baaa Gum for a grand lad, so to speak.

Speaking on a personal note, I must say it has been and will continue to be a pleasure being amongst a man whom I consider an absolute success, in all things that truly do matter.

Your beloved wife and family look upon you as a man that is nothing short of essential, for love, kindness, sensibility and guidance. Trust me, I've seen, I know, because I see with the same eyes. On your 60th rejoice at the accomplishment you have been integral to make possible.

I could go on with the superlatives no end, but it's probably best I close before I digress from the conciseness of what I wanted to let you know.

In a nutshell, I lu's ya mate, and I guess you can consider me a great fan of you and the man you are.

Love always my fine father in law!
Proudly and admiringly yours,
Michael Light.

P.S And the lad can sing like an angel!!! (fam thinks so too!)

Robba!

I remember the first time we spoke. I was huddled over a phone in Booth City making idle chit-chat with my future father-in-law wondering how I could bring up the notion of asking for your daughter's hand in marriage. You, on the other hand, had heard through the grapevine that I fancied myself as an Elvis impersonator and wanted by best "hunka hunka burning love... thankya very much."

Twelve and a half years have gone by and I am pleased to say that you were more than happy to give your daughter away and I'm even happier to say that I have kept those renditions to myself (and Claire of course).

I've been around for a day or two and I reckon that pound for pound you are one of the best I've met: patient, understanding, wise (beyond your years) and a damn fine sportsman. Well, maybe all of those but one. Oh, and you're an outstanding lifesaver. Our time in Albany speaks for itself!

Add that to being a loving grandfather to my blessed girls and it equals you being one of my best mates.

I look forward to many more years of laughter and happiness.

I love ya Robba!
Tony

