

# A celebration of life

## Patricia Legge

13 March 1940 - 7th November 2019

1.00 - 2.00 pm, 28th November 2019, Cam Valley Crematorium

*a personal goodbye*

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**Humanist**  
*Ceremonies*

## **Tribute to Pat**

Humanism is an approach to life that appreciates the natural world, puts great value on human relationships and drives us to make the very most of our lives.

These are values and outlooks that Pat shared.

She was a straightforward person, full of life and love.

Today, we will remember Pat as she was, before her illness claimed her prematurely and we will celebrate the best parts of her life, remembering her as an extraordinary woman and a life well lived.

Pat first became ill about 18 months ago but did not want extensive treatment for her oesophageal cancer, preferring quality of life over a difficult extension of it. She became very ill at the beginning of this year but remained stoical, continued to put others first as always and very much enjoyed and appreciated the many visits from friends and family.

Pat lived in Shelford for over fifty years and was a well known member of the community. Karen and Alex grew up there and when they were seven and five Pat attended Homerton College to train as a teacher. She loved teaching and taught at primary schools in Stapleford, Grantchester and Coton where she became Deputy Head. Her final years teaching were spent as Headteacher at Harston and Newton Primary School. We will hear more about Pat as a teacher and Headteacher from Ken Jackson who worked with Pat for many years during her teaching career.

Pat was also a woman with many friends and enjoyed amateur dramatics both acting and more recently writing for performances.

She always had time for others but did not suffer fools gladly, being quite straightforward, you always knew where you stood with Pat.

Her family were always of the utmost importance to Pat, she was an amazing mother and for the last twenty-eight years adored being a terrific grandmother, to Karen and Rob's daughter Lucy and twins Joe and Tom and Alex and Al's son Wyn and was also very much a grandmother to Al's children Perys, Owain, and Dylan. Her grandchildren became the most important part of her life.

Pat was strong minded and very much 'her own woman'. Today we celebrate her life, lived with a generous spirit and much love.

Now we will hear about Pat as a teacher and Headteacher, Ken.....

### **Recollections of Pat as a teacher and Headteacher, Ken Jackson**

*Ken first worked with Pat when she was a brand new teacher and later worked with her again at Harston. This letter demonstrates her thoughtful and caring approach to teaching.*

*Extract from a newsletter to parents in 1990 written in response to parental concern that the formal sports day was to be abolished at Harston and Newton Primary School:*

We chose to change the format of our sports day for several reasons. The aim is to ensure that all primary school children enjoy sport and sporting activities for their own sake and not just because they are good at them, which many are not for various reasons.

What better way to enjoy sports day than to see how much better you can do in the activities you did last year. It doesn't matter how good or bad you are compared to other people – just how much you can improve on your own score. No child has to go through the demotivating aspect of doing badly in front of large crowds of people year after year.

We all know the arguments about preparing children to live in a competitive world. Anyone who has taught for even a short while knows that most children are naturally competitive, we don't have to encourage it.

What we try to do is to give each child a good self -image in every area of the curriculum. We do this by encouraging them to compete against their own past efforts, and to judge their success by the progress **they** are making, not by where they stand in relation to other people, whether it is in running, mathematics, reading or whatever – they know that anyway – and probably have done since they were in class 1!

You might like to look at it another way. Children who are highly competitive are usually only interested in keeping one step ahead of the person or people they are competing against. Who knows how much further, or faster they could go if they were competing against their **own** past efforts? Competition against others can keep even the ablest child children performing below their potential!!

A Tribute to Pat from Mike Knapton, a friend of the family of long standing.

### **Tribute to Pat, Mike Knapton**

Patricia Ivall was born in Alverstoke. Her father was an aircraft fitter at HMS Daedalus Royal Navy Air base in nearby Lee on Solent. The family moved to Duxford, where they ran the People's Stores, where Pat grew up with her sister Fay and her brother Jim. Her parents then opened the local Post Office next door. Perhaps a foretaste of things to come, Pat's mother was a keen pianist for the local amateur dramatic scene. After school and a brief sojourn in Ramsgate, Pat returned to Cambridge, and worked at Babraham Research Institute.

It was here at the Institute in Babraham that Pat met Anthony Legge. They married in December 1961. Karen was born when they lived in Warkworth Street Cambridge, and then the family moved to Babraham where Alex was born. Tony left Babraham Institute to study at Cambridge University for a degree in Archaeology, a subject that became his life's work. Undaunted by the need to live on a student income Pat and Tony moved to live in a cottage in Kings Mill Lane, Gt Shelford, looking after the big house and garden, in return for their grace and favour home. A modest home, but one that was fit to entertain a future King. One of Tony's fellow students was Prince Charles, who came around for dinner one evening. A grand occasion apparently, even the new potatoes were all the same size thanks to the local grocer. Though generous as ever and not one to be bound by protocol, Pat was unable to persuade Charles' bodyguard out of the MG parked outside, to join them for supper. Pat still has the hand-written letter from His Royal Highness thanking her for her hospitality and generosity.

Pat then decided to pursue a career in education. She trained at Homerton College. Pat's first teaching job was at Stapleford Primary where she first met and worked with Ken Jackson.

Tragically, it was at this time that Pat and her sister Fay lost their brother, Jim, in a road traffic accident – and Penny, Jim's wife, lost her beloved husband. Penny remained close to Pat and even after her move to Italy, kept in close contact with her throughout her life.

Pat then moved to Granchester Primary School where she worked again with Ken. Together they were able to inspire a generation of children with a sense

of curiosity and self-confidence. Pat was not one to be precious however – on a residential school trip to the windmill at Burnham Overy Staithe Pat gave one boy, who was allegedly allergic to cow's milk, his morning cereal with cow's milk on the basis that he needed feeding up - with no adverse consequences. Pat made friendships with parents and children that have endured and one of the many families comes to mind - Jan and Ivan Vaughan, and their children Sophie and Justin.

Pat then moved to Coton school and became deputy head, where she worked with Hazel Crabtree. Hazel and Roger's daughter Al went out with a young Alex - Alex and Al's lives parted but after many years they were reunited and are now living in Netley, very close to the family's beginnings in Gosport.

Pat took her MA at Madingley Hall Institute of Education where she met Ruth Poulton. I suspect the academics were unprepared for what they unleashed in bringing two feisty head teachers together - becoming close colleagues and firm friends.

Pat eventually moved to Harston and Newton Primary School as the head teacher. Pat ran the school firm in her values focussing on the children's needs and development. Empathetic and thoughtful, when one of Pat's pupils was diagnosed with cancer, Pat anticipated that loss of hair as a result of treatment would be difficult when returning to school and therefore Pat started to wear beanie hat at school - other pupils followed Pat's sartorial example, so reducing the stigma and embarrassment all round. Pat was able to inspire loyalty and she continued to work with Ken Jackson and was supported by Gill Pluck, who was school secretary - Gill still works at the school in the mornings to this day.

Notable achievements included the school steel band led by Jane Eden, taking the school band to the Edinburgh festival. And in a reversal of the usual format of musical evenings Pat invited parents to accompany their children - a somewhat nerve-wracking experience with the mums and dads, but a great leveller.

I was fortunate to meet Pat about this time, when I was a GP at Harston surgery. A bachelor at the time - I later learned that Pat explained why an apparently eligible bachelor in a good job was not married on the basis that he must be either a misogynist, psychopath or gay! She was looking for a pianist for a pantomime she had written for Harston Amateur Dramatic

Society - HATS - unsurprisingly perhaps, it was a feminist reinterpretation of 'Sleeping Beauty' - way ahead of its time! When Pat met my husband Nick, her passion for education inspired him to train as a teacher.

Pat eventually retired from Harston and Newton Primary School and ran a B and B from her home in Gt Shelford. Pat was a great cook and I can personally attest to the fantastic breakfasts she served up. This gave Pat much more time to spend with her family and friends, in her garden and to travel.

An intrepid traveller, she first travelled with Tony to work on archaeological digs in Greece and Israel, later they visited Syria and Jordan and the palace in Ambel, Spain. She was fortunate when Alex worked in Singapore to have a base to travel from in the Far East including a memorable encounter with an orangutan in the Sumatran jungle. Pat also visited Karen, when she worked in Ghana - one story, cycling through the bush to a nearby village, Pat, as matriarch, led the way and was feted by the local chief and honoured with the gift of a live duck. Pat proudly cycled back to where Karen was staying with the duck tied to the back of her bike. History does not relate as to the fate of the duck! Travelling with Nick and I one year, we took a flight from Kuala Lumpur to the east coast of Malaysia on Pelangi airlines - or 'Plungy' airlines as we anxiously called it - our anxieties were not assuaged when on boarding we realised there were very few other passengers on board. Still, after a perilous boat journey across the South China Sea, we arrived at the beautiful island of Redang. I was also fortunate to travel with Pat to Morocco – where we enjoyed watching the sun set over the western Sahara with a couple of glasses of Jack Daniels.

Back home Pat's kitchen table bears the patina and scars of many celebrations with family and friends. Her Sunday lunches were happy occasions for all family and friends alike – especially when Karen and Rob's children were young. The photo of Pat on the front of the order of service is of Pat at Karen and Rob's wedding – a very happy occasion for Pat after her recent break up with Tony. Pat loved to prepare Easter egg hunts when the grand-children were young - and not so young. Pat would test out the clues on me to check they were not too easy - or hard. And her Boxing Day dinner and games were a regular tradition for many years. In the summer we would be out in the garden enjoying Sunday lunch or evening drinks. And Pat made a tradition of an August dinner party for the joint birthdays of Sarah Bradbury, Colin Greenhalgh, Marianne Karpas, Patrick Wynn-Jones and me - all Leos.

There was a special place in Pat's heart for her grandchildren - Lucy, Tom and Joe, and Wyn. It is not possible to adequately express the love, pride and joy Pat had in all her grandchildren. However, they gave Pat so much to be proud of. She would follow their every achievement and success over the years - Lucy qualifying as a doctor, Joe a biomedical research scientist and Tom an archaeologist. I know that Pat was looking forward to celebrating Wyn's eighteenth birthday next year.

Pat was generous, kind, curious, strong minded, forthright, brave - and great fun to be with. As one friend put it on hearing that Pat had died - "She was one feisty dame".

We all are sad that Pat is no longer with us, and it is hard to let go and the pain of grief is all too acute - but our shared memories of Pat means she lives in us all and we will all have our own memories to recall with joy, fondness and love.

The late Maya Angelou stated,

*"You have no idea what your legacy will be. Your legacy is what you do every day. Your legacy is every life you've touched, every person whose life was either moved or not. It's every person you've harmed or helped. That's your legacy."*

*"Your legacy is every life you've touched."* - Pat's legacy is that she touched all our lives.