

# A horse breeder of pedigree

WHEN you're a descendant of one of the most famous founding families of Brisbane, you get used to recognition.

And Sue Clarke (nee Petrie) was proud of her heritage.

Her great-great-grandfather Andrew Petrie was one of the first free settlers to move to Brisbane and his construction firm built Parliament House, the GPO and the Port Office. Her great-great-grandfather John Petrie was the city's first mayor.

But Mrs Clarke was well known in her own right as a horse breeder.

Like many little girls, she grew up wanting her own pony but always ended up with someone else's as her dad waited for her passion for horses to fade.

It never did. When she married Barton Clarke in 1968, she was a practicing psychologist.

Little did he know the key role he'd play when she decided to pursue a career change.

As part of the marriage contract, he promised to buy his wife her own pony.

Almost 40 years later, her pony stud Glenormiston had become one of the most successful Connemara studs in Australia – and internationally.

**Susan Margaret Clarke**  
**Horse breeder**  
**Born:** October 12, 1944, Brisbane  
**Died:** May 22, 2012, Brisbane

There are Glenormiston Connemaras around the world thanks to Mrs Clarke, including in the US, Germany, New Zealand, Thailand, Japan and Korea, not to mention in every Australian state and territory.

The breed is an Irish pony from the region Connemara and is well known for its quiet temperament, not to mention being a great all-rounder.

In 1974, when Mrs Clarke set up the pony stud in Upper Brookfield, on Brisbane's western outskirts, little was known about this breed.

Now, it and Mrs Clarke are prominent names in the horse and pony breeding world.

She started with a part-bred Connemara foal. A year later, she had bred her first pony and before long Mrs Clarke was



**RESPECTED:** Sue Clarke helped make the Connemara pony internationally famous.

importing a selection of broodmares and stallions from the UK, Ireland and Denmark, introducing some of the world's best Connemara bloodlines into Australia.

Her ponies have gone on to represent their states in dressage, showjumping and

eventing, as well as hack and in-hand classes.

Mrs Clarke's ability to produce world-class ponies earned her a spot on the international judging circuit. She was the first Australian to judge in Ireland (at the Clifden Show) and in Germany as well as in Britain.

Her success in these endeavours did not go unnoticed.

In March this year, she was presented with an international lifetime achievement award from the International Committee of Connemara Pony Society – the 2012 Michael O'Malley Award – for produc-

ing some of the best ponies in the world.

This award is given to a person outside Ireland who has selflessly promoted the breed.

An inspiration to so many, Mrs Clarke has been described as one of the grand matriarchs of the Connemara pony breed, and a mentor to countless others passionate about horses.

She helped nurture the riding skills of hundreds of children at Le Vale Pony Club. This was the first pony club in Queensland and, thanks to Mrs Clarke, it lived on to be one of the oldest after she fought to keep the club alive – even after her own children had hung up their boots.

When Mrs Clarke wasn't in the paddocks with the horses or in the show ring, she was entertaining her much-loved grandchildren – Jessica, Angus, Lachlan, Jack, Isobel and Edward.

She died after a short battle with breast cancer, but her legacy lives on through her children and grandchildren and all the Glenormiston ponies of the world.

Mrs Clarke is survived by her husband Barton, children Andrew, Sarah and Sophie, and her grandchildren.

**To organise a funeral notice call 132 202**

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