

Susie Wishart

92, Kenmore Hills

Interview **TONYA TURNER**

The love I have for my family has sustained me throughout my life. My first husband John and I had known each other since we were young. He lived in Portsea and I lived in Sorrento in Victoria.

I had an extremely happy childhood. If I wasn't on the beach I was playing tennis or on the golf course.

John and I got married when I was 23. We were only married for three years when he was the victim of a shark attack.

I was two months' pregnant at the time. He was a lifeguard and it was just after the Sorrento-Portsea Lifesaving Club championships had ended.

He was out swimming in the surf with a group of members from the club when the shark attacked and that was it, he was gone.

That was 67 years ago. I think having our son, Tim, kept me going at the time. Luckily I had a good pregnancy and an easy birth.

I met my second husband, Fred, through friends.

There'd been a photo of Tim and I in the paper and he told one of his friends, "I'm going to marry that girl."

Fred had a boat and we used to go waterskiing a lot. After we got married he said he wanted to live somewhere warmer, so we moved to Buderim on the Sunshine Coast.

It was a pretty good lifestyle and we had a daughter, Jann, who now lives in



PICTURE: DAVID KELLY

Singapore. We entertained a lot and always had friends over for dinner parties and what have you.

I've been on my own now for 25 years. Fred got Alzheimer's disease and it was a case of looking after him for seven years. Alzheimer's is a horrible thing. Fred had a wonderful personality but he totally changed. He just wasn't the same person anymore. In the end he got pneumonia – that's what finished him.

A year ago I moved to Blue Care's Iona retirement village to live closer to Tim and his wife Vickie.

They're just 10 minutes away and it's wonderful to be able to see them regularly.

Every Thursday I play carpet bowls in the community centre and there are always activities happening like happy hour or tea parties.

To stay active I have a very short walk

of a morning and I have some dumbbells I do exercises with. Luckily I don't need a stick or a walker yet.

Baking and painting are my two main interests these days. I use a shortbread recipe that I vary into different biscuits, like cinnamon and almond, walnut and date, or jam drops. I've never bought a sweet biscuit in my life – they're always homemade.

I have a set of watercolour paints I've been using for yonks. I wanted to study art when I was young but my darling mother had other plans. Growing up, my parents had a ladies and gents hairdressing salon.

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Many years later she pushed me into hairdressing, which I never wanted to do. I got sent off to hairdressing college and I was very upset at the time. I was 17.

I remember we were out buying uniforms and I was just standing there crying, but she'd made up her mind and that was that. I didn't have any choice and I never did get to study art, but I dabbled.

I like to paint cards with flowers on them, and occasionally

I give a pack of cards as a present to somebody. Mainly I just paint from memory, or sketch something out like a hibiscus and go from there.

I don't profess to be an artist but it keeps me out of trouble.