

I worked with Elsie Witchen At Pika Wiya Health Service in 1985 and 1986 and I caught up with her quite a few times in between.

We became really good friends and she and Carol Holland and I became a great team, working on the soup round and tablet run together.

She gave me my Pitjantjatjara name, Imundra and use to say to me "Nyuntu ngayuku kangkuru". We called each other sisters and we were also friends and partners in crime. But she was also my teacher. She was so patient with me and taught me lots of language and lots about her culture and especially about the lives of the people and our clients at Davenport and Port Augusta.

After work, we would often sit outside and just have a good old yarn together. She was articulate, fun and very kind. She knew well about white fella ways and was an absolute master at being an advocate for her people in a very subtle but strong way. She was quiet and humble but really got things done. So often catastrophes were averted and emergencies were managed because Elsie Witchen had kept us informed. All the doctors would ask to speak to Elsie if they needed to know something about the lives of the people in the community. I remember one doctor telling me that Elsie was the most valuable Health Worker Pika Wiya had.

She was really clever and wise and learnt fast. She remembered everything. I'd have to write down things but Elsie kept it all in her mind. She was so kind and thought of things to help people out. Who to give extra food to...where someone was hiding... who to contact when someone was sick. She knew who had been missed out on our run and she knew how to handle difficult people. She would just whisper something to someone so we could work quietly without any fuss. She worked twice as hard as anyone else because she lived in the community and if anyone was sick they'd so often just go to Elsie.

Sometimes we'd do tricks on other health workers and then just laugh and laugh. I so remember the twinkle in her eye as she'd just look at me before we'd get in the car. We'd wait until we got round the corner before we'd crack up laughing.

Elsie was a beautiful person. She was kind, generous, clever and thoughtful. She made good decisions, gave good advice and never complained. She was the best friend.

I send my sympathy to Nicole and all her family. I am so sad. Thank you Elsie. "Nyuntu ngayuku malanypa".

By Anna Markey.

In loving memory of

Elsie Witchen



1960 - 2017



Sister of Margaret Nunn (dec), Maxie, Remy & Jenny.

Mother of Nicole, Michael (Manu dec)

Grandmother of Marly, David, Dakota & Karamiha.

Great Grandmother of Precious, Peter. Raylene & Dalton.

Niece of Minnie Rosella & Milly Myson.

*Sister in law to Raelene (dec), Beverley (dec), Bobby (dec), Raelene,
Anthony, Kingsley and Marlene*

Cousin of Meredith, Margie, Douglas, Norman, Mark (dec)

*Aunty of Robert (dec) Jacob, Rexina, Katharina, Kingsley, Tonilee,
Thomas, Melissa, Daniel, Maxine, Jazabell, Ashley, Patricia, Glem
and Ronald*

Partner of Mickey Russell &

Special Friend to David Kuma Brown

*Will be sadly missed by the Witchen, Rosella, Myson, Buzzacott,
Browns, Crombies, Amos, Chruchill, McKenzie, Marks, Dudleys,
Coulthard, Wilton, Hakeem, Wayne, Murray, Russell families and
the Davenport & Port Augusta communities.*

Elsie was born at the Port Augusta Hospital to Sadie & Ted Witchen (both deceased) on the 3/11/1960 She grew up in Davenport at 4 Shaw St with her Brother & Sister and then she was placed at Umeewarra Mission in her teen years when her mum got sick. Her close friends at the Mission included Veronica Jackson, Joanne Dingaman, Marlene Mungerannie they stayed close throughout her life, until they all passed away.

She attended Umeewarra Mission & Willsden Primary School then onto Port Augusta High School. Elsie lived at Davenport for the whole of her life but she loved to go visiting other family and friends at Oodnadatta, Finke, Coober Pedy, Copley and Port Lincoln.

She worked at Pika Wiya as a health worker and was well respected by the staff and patients there. She brought a great deal of community and cultural wisdom to the job and this was highly valued by Pika Wiya.

Family was very important to her and she loved her brothers and sisters and loved to spend time with them and their families. She was very close to her sister Margy and when she sadly passed away Elsie was devastated. She also had a very close relationship with Meredith, her sister cousin. She was very close to her brother Maxy and she looked after him when he got sick, they always looked out for each other. Maxy can remember pushing her around as a kid through the salt bush around reserve. They used to play chasey and at night they would listen to their parents telling stories and watch the satellites go over.

Elsie had two beautiful children who she was very proud of and she stayed close to them throughout their lives. Sadly Manu was taken from her at a very early age and she never ever recovered from this loss. There wasn't a day goes by that she didn't talk about him, she always kept him close to her heart.. Her favourite colour was red and that was because Manu played for South Augusta. Her most enjoyable past time was looking for Kalta with her Davenport Grandchildren & David.

But with all of this sadness, Elsie loved life. She loved to party with all the 70s music, including Elton John, Goodbye Norma Jean that was her favourite. The whole of reserve often knew when Elsie was partying as the music would be blasting out. She loved to dance and she really knew how to have a good time. Her house was always open for her family it didn't matter how many were there

She enjoyed going out bush looking & digging for rabbits with her Mother & Aunty Minnie & Betty. Her Best Friend to her was her Cousin Sister Maisie. They both grew up on Davenport Community making cubby houses in the sandhills around the community & looking for gums off the wattle trees.

Elsie played netball for the Umeewarra Mission in C grade, her position was WD. Judy Ferguson (nee Martin) was coach & they went & won the C Grade grandfinal. She was very proud of her best Player award for Umeewarra C Grade netball team. She was a one eyed Power supporter and she used to love to give it to Crows supporters getting cheeky with them.



When she got sick, she remained private, but she was heard to say she wasn't going quietly she was going to party and she did, she lived life to the full.

She was a big part of the Davenport Community and she will be sadly missed by the whole community. She will be forever in the hearts of her family and friends and missed by all who knew her