



# Maria Wilhemina Catherina Grundemann Walta 1914 - 2010

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Mary has left a great legacy to many people and their communities. Her faith, organizational skills, compassion, energy, perseverance, and most importantly her sense of what is "enough" in life, have kept many focused on the needs of others.

[\*More about Mary\*](#)

SAY  
HER  
NAME

# Maria Wilhelmina Catherina Grundemann Walta

Mary was born on 6 February 1914 in den Haag, Holland and was the eldest of 5 children. After leaving school she worked in a household department store and held in high esteem by her employer.

Mary married Andrew Walta 1942. Without doubt the most outstanding aspect of Mary's life was her strong faith and trust in God who would ensure "all will be well" whatever the difficulties and challenges that presented themselves. They certainly did present themselves!

In 1942, the Germans occupied the Netherlands and life was difficult surviving the hardships of World War 2. Andrew was a butcher by trade. During that time they secretly parceled off food to Jewish families hiding in the town. Andrew and Mary quickly established a family and by 1955, had nine children.

In 1955 the family migrated to Australia with the hope of providing a better future for everyone.

To start their new life Andrew worked several jobs, until he introduced the family to dairy farming, to which they moved on at Buninyong.

A typical day for Mary included milking the cows by hand, feeding pigs and calves, tending chooks and geese, chopping wood, while she baked bread and tended an extensive veggie garden, in addition managing the needs of a family of ten children.

After 30 years of marriage Andrew died on 22 May 1972, The farm was sold and Mary and the youngest daughter, also Mary, settled in Manifold Heights, Geelong. It was from here that Mary traded her life of childrearing and farming for a life dedicated to helping others in need. Her passion became fundraising for worthy causes. In Geelong, and later in Ballarat and Melbourne she raised hundreds of thousands of dollars using her creative talents and organizational skills. No one was spared in her single-mindedness to support the great variety of causes: whether selling tickets, sewing, and knitting, crocheting or manning stalls; her greatest delight was to see the whole family and community involved.

Mary was an ardent supporter of the Ryder Cheshire Foundation. Sue and Leonard Cheshire were a great inspiration for her outlook on life. Mary was the first "home mother" at the Ivanhoe residence established to provide accommodation for country people receiving medical treatment in Melbourne.

She moved on to the Dutch elderly community, Providence Village in Bacchus Marsh. But here, too, she continued her active involvement with parish and community affairs. She was described as a pillar of strength for many of the elderly.

It was at this time that Mary became a great supporter of Street Kids in Melbourne. She was known to give practical support by cooking meals for the support team as well as being an active member of the Prayer Group.

In the evening of her life, in 2003, Mary moved to the Holy Family Hostel at Nazareth House, in Camberwell. Her unstoppable enthusiasm and energy, however, was again devoted to raising funds through her support of the Fete, trading tables and morning teas.

As we reflect on Mary's extraordinary life we remember her great enthusiasm and optimism no matter how great the difficulty or challenging the task. The darkest cloud always had a silver lining! And yes, all was indeed well.

Mary has left a huge legacy to many people and communities. Her faith, organizational skills, compassion, energy, perseverance, and most importantly her sense of what is "enough" in life, have kept many focused on the needs of others.

Contributed by Josie Walta, daughter-in-law