



Speech by

DESLEY SCOTT

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MRS L. LINK

Mrs DESLEY SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (12.03 p.m.): It is with great sadness that I report to the House the passing of Mrs Linda Link—Aunty Linda to many and simply Mum to the many thousands of students she helped over 20 years while she was firstly a teacher aide and then a community education counsellor. I wish to acknowledge members of Linda's family in the gallery this morning: husband, Roy; daughter Dinah; granddaughter Jasmin; and colleagues and friends Peggy Tidyman, Sarah Ger and Albert and Nancy Bowie. I am indebted to Roy, Peggy and Mabel Park High Principal Ms Roslyn Parkes for much of the background on Linda's life.

I recently enjoyed some time with Linda at Kingston College for International Women's Day. We had both been invited to speak to senior students. Linda was a very proud Aboriginal woman who was greatly loved by her family, her community, the many staff members she worked with and the students she cared for during her 20 years of service at Woodridge High School, Mabel Park High School and Kingston College. She provided additional support to indigenous students in other schools such as Shailer Park, Loganlea and Beenleigh high schools.

Linda was a very special and unique person. In the words of Principal Ros Parkes—

Linda had a huge capacity to love and an ability to give to people. She showed kids that even when life has its ups and downs, it's still important to show care and concern for others.

This she did right throughout her life. I recently spent some time with Roy and learned of their earlier years—their courtship, their family life and the love they shared for their community and especially the young people.

Linda was born in Brisbane on 21 March 1942 and spent her early years at Victoria Point before moving with her family to Holland Park. She was a student at Holland Park State School. However, because of family circumstances she had to leave after year 4 to care for her younger brothers and sisters. When Linda was just 11 she met Roy, then aged 13, and they dated until they married seven years later, when Linda was 18. They moved to a Housing Commission home in Slacks Creek in 1971, where they remained and raised their large and happy family of seven children. There are now 18 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Roy recalls happy days at Wynnum where they went worming together and received 20c a dozen for their catch. Linda worked for a trailer firm fitting lights until 1984 when she joined the Education Department as a teacher aide.

Peggy tells me that it was in the mid-1970s at Cherbourg that the concept of a teacher aide was first born. Indigenous parents were concerned about their children and wanted a greater link between home and school. Linda's position remained temporary from 1984 until 1996, when she finally gained a permanent position as a community education counsellor. Her position was hard won. She undertook studies through James Cook University and was one of just nine students of an original 40 to graduate with her degree, a Bachelor of Community Welfare, which was a tribute to her determination.

Linda was indeed a wonderful inspiration to her students by example as well as by her encouragement. Her students now occupy positions such as teachers, lawyers, social workers, accountants, physiotherapists, chefs, sporting achievers, secretaries, tradesmen and myriad others. What they all have in common is this: they will be better men and women for having known Linda and having been guided by her along the way.

Whether it was NAIDOC celebrations, sporting events or school camps, Linda was there. The safety, welfare and future of her students was very important to her. Linda passed away on 22 March. Colleagues and students, family members and community members joined together on Friday, 28

March to celebrate a wonderful life devoted to others. We grieve for Roy and his family, who will miss such a rare individual—one who was wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, educator, wise counsellor, mentor or friend and one who showed a great deal of pride in her Aboriginal heritage. We are saddened that Linda's voice of encouragement to students is now quiet.

On Friday, 2 May it was my privilege to attend a special ceremony at Mabel Park High School where personal tributes were paid to Linda, and her favourite flower, a rose, was planted in the school's memorial garden. Special friend, Aboriginal elder and renowned artist Reg Knox prepared a beautiful memorial in stone which will always remind the school family of their loving, caring friend Linda.