




Speech By
Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

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MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Gamin, Mrs JM

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (9.45 am): Judith Margaret Gamin was born on 18 July 1930 in Broken Hill to George Fisher, a mining engineer with Broken Hill Pty Ltd, now known as BHP, and Eileen Triggs, a nurse at the Broken Hill Hospital. Judy was the oldest of four children, along with Helen, Peter and Christine—and Christine is joining us in the chamber today. Judy passed away on 7 August, just a few short weeks ago. As I told the House at our last sitting, with the passing of Judy my electorate of Burleigh has lost the last of a dynamic political team that was well respected and will be missed. Judy's husband, Paul, who passed away in 2019, served as a councillor for the Burleigh area from 1985 until 2000. During that time, Judy was also bitten by the political bug, and I will cover that later in my contribution.

I knew Judy through politics mainly. I really did not know that much about her earlier life, so it was enlightening to attend Judy's funeral on Friday, 19 August, along with a large crowd, to hear about her early years from her daughters, Liz and Caroline, and her son, Peter. Both Caroline and Peter are here with us in the gallery today, along with Peter's son, Timothy, and Judy's sister, Christine McDonald. Peter and Caroline have kindly given me permission to read some of their eulogy into *Hansard* today because I think their words will give better justice to Judy than I can.

Judy spent her early years in Broken Hill before attending school in Adelaide as a boarder. Caroline described her mother as coming from a long lineage of women who were known for being capable leaders and doers. Judy's words to describe herself were slightly different—that being bossy and managing, and I can testify to that. Of course, in those times, within the context of a more male dominated world, perhaps they were the words used. Judy was certainly all of that and more. She was a woman ahead of her time. I would have to say that I understand Judy describing herself in that way. That is the political side of her that I knew.

Judy wanted to study medicine and become a doctor. Her father George said no because it was not a profession for a woman. Instead she enrolled in a science degree at the Adelaide university. Very little study occurred apparently. Instead, many social events were attended. As Caroline told us at the funeral, when they looked through the university year books, they found page after page after page of photos of Judy in almost every club or group. There was the Glee Club, although Caroline said that the family had very little knowledge of her singing ability. She was secretary of the Women's Union, which Caroline said was more to her style, and she was a university sports queen—and apparently the family did not know much about that either.

This very social life continued until her results came home to George. He was very firm but fairly direct. He told Judy that she had to improve her marks or she would not be staying. Judy failed to hear that warning, and George, a man of his word, followed through. Her university days were over and she got a job at the Broken Hill Hospital as a pathology technician.

George and Eileen moved to Mount Isa in 1952. Shortly after arriving, Eileen became very unwell and lost the sight of one eye. That is when Judy stepped up and became the cook of the household. She had no misconceptions of her cooking ability, but her feelings were a little hurt when she overheard her parents talking in their bedroom one night saying that they needed to find anyone but Judy to do the cooking. I never heard Paul complain about her cooking though.

She worked in TAA at Mount Isa as a travel agent and, in 1955, as a woman well ahead of her time, she went to London. She was 25, working as a travel agent and loving life. She lived in the same accommodation at Earls Court as Edmund Hillary and John Hunt who were doing their Antarctic expeditions and said what interesting fellows they were. She made friends and she had enormous fun. This good time came to an end when the Suez Canal crisis began in 1956. At this point of the eulogy Caroline said, 'This is starting to sound like an episode of The Crown.' George sent a telegram insisting she come home immediately. He followed that up with another containing flight details. This was becoming a familiar pattern, apparently, so she came home.

Judy settled in Brisbane and became TAA's first overseas travel agent there. Her friend, Austin Lennon, from Mount Isa days, was also in Brisbane and he introduced her to his good friend, Paul Gamin. They were married the next year. Caroline said that her mum told her that she and her dad would talk about anything and everything. She had never met anyone else she could do that with and was just so happy to be married to someone she could talk to. Caroline said her dad adored her, and she thought he was brilliant. They were married in Mount Isa.

Judy was the patron of many clubs and organisations in her lifetime, but one of those she held close to her heart was being the patron of the Mount Isa Bagpipers. The bagpipers were thrilled. They piped her to the church and out of the church. Apparently Father Dwyer loathed the Scottish pipers and would not let them in the church. Paul and Judy were booked on the Saturday afternoon plane to Brisbane. Eileen had the bright idea that if the Saturday afternoon flight could be delayed by an hour, it would give the happy couple a little longer at their nuptials. TAA reluctantly agreed—and I have never heard of an airline agreeing to anything—but did not foresee that strong tail winds from Darwin got the plane to Mount Isa an hour early. This meant that the passengers waited on the plane for two hours in Mount Isa for Judy and Paul to join them. It was 35 degrees that day, apparently. The pipers piped Judy and Paul to the stairs of the plane with confetti in their hair. The happy couple entered the plane to thundering looks from the other passengers and the deafening silence was enough to make Paul and Judy slide quietly into their seats and hardly say a word to each other.

Brisbane was their home for a number of years. Paul's extended family were there and Judy was welcomed with open arms. In 1964, Paul and Judy headed to the Gold Coast; their new curtain manufacturing business in Southport beckoned—Gamin's Furnishings in Nerang Street, Southport. Judy and Paul ran that business for 20 years. Sadly, Judy and Paul suffered a cruel loss that would affect the rest of their lives when their two sons, Tom and John, and Judy's mother Eileen were killed in the crash of Ansett-ANA flight 149 near Winton in western Queensland on 22 September 1966. A few months later, Peter was born.

Paul and Judy lived in Mermaid Beach in a two-storey fibro house on the land they purchased from the Catholic Church before building at Skyline Terrace, Burleigh Heads in 1968, complete with a duck pond with ducks and geese, which they eventually ate, and a vegetable garden that turned out to be full of nutgrass. This is where Judy's life and my life start to intercept. Judy was with TAA; I was with East West and Ansett. Judy's family lived in Broken Hill; my parents lived in Broken Hill for a number of years. I ended up living next door to the house they built on Skyline Terrace. Then I lived in Skyline Terrace for a number of years. In fact, Burleigh has been represented by only three members of parliament in the past 30 years so we are a pretty parochial lot in Burleigh, I can tell you that.

Caroline described family life with Judy at the helm was about consistency, routine, Scotch Finger biscuits, packet mix cakes, a handful of rules and a lot of books—another place where we intercept—and a lot of old-fashioned practical parenting. Every night when Paul came home, they would sit together, have a drink and a nibble and catch up on their day. It was a strictly no-children zone. To achieve that, they locked themselves in their lounge room every night. That is something I have not tried. In fact, my lounge room does not even have a door, so I am not sure how I can do that. They were each other's best friends. Judy did the books for the business and everything in the house which was not nailed down was upholstered, including the teddy bears. She also chose all of the curtains, ran the school tuckshop, was involved with the parish, and she taught religion in the state schools.

While she became a member of the National Party in 1952, she became a more active member of the party in the late sixties and certainly in the years to come. When Russ Hinze left parliament in 1988, she won a by-election for the seat of South Coast which took in at the time a lot of the Gold Coast. Peter told the crowd at Judy's funeral there was a cricket pitch of candidates for preselection and a

cricket field of candidates for the by-election, with preferences flying everywhere. She ended up winning by 144 votes. He remembers sitting down in the lounge room at the Skyline Terrace home sometime after the results came through for the South Coast by-election with a calculator, a pen and paper and telling his mother she could claim it based on scrutineer feedback on preference flows. At that time, there was no computerised tally of votes, and Peter's uncle, Don, was the President of the National Party at the same time and said to her, 'Are you sure, Jude?' Shortly afterwards she was sworn in at state parliament. She recounted it as a somewhat terrifying experience all by herself, and I think many of us can attest to that. As she tried to see where the Clerk was telling her to sign and control her shaking hands, Tom Burns from the opposition front bench called out to her, 'Go down on your hands and knees, Jude, and thank Christ for the ALP preferences. You'll never see them again.'

Judy lost out to Mr Quinn in the December 1989 state election, but returned to parliament when she won the newly created seat of Burleigh in 1992, as we have heard. Though politics had its ups and downs for Judy, she stood at a total of seven elections and won four. Again, we intercept: I have stood for six and won four. She lost the newly created federal seat of Moncrieff to the Liberals, won Russ Hinze's seat of South Coast in a by-election, lost South Coast at the next general election, won the newly created seat of Burleigh three times and then lost it to Christine Smith. Are we keeping track of all of this? Peter said, 'It wasn't the wins I admired about Mum, it was the way she handled defeat, congratulating her successor and attending the declaration of the poll accepting second place.' With her last loss to Christine Smith, they became good friends, and I have become good friends with Christine Smith across the political divide. Politics is a funny world.

During her time in this place, Judy held a number of positions. As we have heard, she was on the select committee for Travelsafe; she was the deputy chairperson of the select committee of Travelsafe; chairperson of a number of committees; and deputy chairperson of the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee. Judy held a number of positions within the National Party executive, including central councillor of the National Party; president and chairperson of branch, electorate and divisional councils; vice-president of the south-east zone; and chairperson of the small business policy committee.

Judy was an avid reader from a child up to the night that she died. She collected books like some women collect shoes. When she ran out of bookshelves to store books, more book shelves were built. I would quite often see her at the local library collecting books. Coincidentally, the Burleigh election pre-poll was always in the hall above the library, so during those pre-poll times I would see Judy wandering by to get another book. It was just about every day I would see her go in, take some back and collect more.

Judy sent me a lovely handwritten note a few months ago to say she had moved to a nursing home in Brisbane. I immediately rang her and we had a good natter. It was about politics and things in general, things that were happening around Burleigh. She did not tell me about her health issues. All she said about moving to Brisbane was, 'It was time, Michael,' and that was Judy.

On behalf of the people of Burleigh and the people I represent, I offer my deepest sympathy to Liz, Caroline, Peter and Christine and their extended family. Vale Judy Gamin.