

Lynette (Lyn) Irene Vaak OAM

1948 – 2019

Lyn Vaak was a member of GFS for 59 years.

Lyn was one of the founding girls when the branch at St John's Mt. Druitt commenced in 1960. It was here that Lyn gave her life to Christ and He used her to reach out, guide and lead others to know Him. Lyn became a cadet leader and then after training, she was commissioned as a leader in 1966.

When she married Uwe Vaak, they moved to Emu Plains. On Lyn's first day at St Paul's Anglican Church Emu Plains, she was met by Helen Marsh, who knew Lyn and her work with GFS. Helen took Lyn straight away to her minister Rev Jim South, with the exciting news that she had found the leader to lead Emu Plain's new GFS branch. So, in 1978 Emu Plains branch was established and ran continuously for 32 years under the leadership of Lyn. Many girls were introduced to the church and shown God's love through this branch and the role models of the leaders. Through the contact with the girl's families, many ladies not only joined GFS but were trained as leaders under Lyn's guidance and have moved onto key positions either in the parish or beyond.



Lyn served GFS on a District level. At different times Lyn held positions, such as Secretary, Treasurer, Coordinator, District Chairman and as an Elected Member for the Blue Mountains District from 1966 to 1999. One highlight of Lyn's association with G.F.S. was when she was presented with her G.F.S. Filigree Brooch for dedicated service in 1991.

On a Sydney GFS Diocesan level, Lyn not only participated in events but was from time to time involved in the organisation of activities. This included being co-opted onto many GFS committees such as camp committees. From 2000-2009 she was elected on to the Board of Management. Lyn was a regular volunteer, helping in the GFS Office up until 2010. Lyn also worked as a paid employee in the GFS Office in St Andrews House for 2 years (1992-1993) as Diocesan Secretary and again in 1997. From 2012 – 2018, Lyn was Diocesan Chairman, she took on the task, to keep G.F.S. alive rather than letting it close. On the 30th March 2019 Lyn was made a Life member of GFS Sydney for her many faithful years' service to GFS.

Lyn attended as a representative for GFS Sydney on many GFS Australia Councils. The first one she attended was in 1993 which was held in Rockhampton and then attended every GFS Australia Council since, which is held every 3 years, until 2018. In January 2018 Lyn was

elected as GFS Australian Vice Chairman and she would have taken over as GFS Australian President in 2021 except that she went to be with our Lord in 2019.

On a GFS World level, Lyn attended the GFS World Council in Cairns Queensland in 2002, Korea in 2008, Ireland in 2011, Wales in 2014 and Perth Western Australia in 2017. Ev Beckenham in her book 'A Faithful Journey-The story of G.F.S. in the Sydney Diocese' says "During my time (as Diocesan Chairman) I learnt firsthand that Lyn was a faithful and dedicated young woman who lives the G.F.S. motto. Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2 in her daily life.

Lyn's community service extended over some 50 years of tireless and continuing work for girls and women through the Girls' Friendly Society. Thus on 8th June 2020 the Governor General announced Lyn's name in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. She received a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community particularly to women and young girls.

GFS was a very big part of Lyn's life and because of Lyn it is a big part of many girls and women in Emu Plains and in Sydney.

Lyn enjoyed the games, the craft, the singing, the bible stories, the camps and the friendships made at GFS. Lyn taught what the letters of GFS stood for. They originally did stand for Girls Friendly Society, but more importantly to Lyn is that they stood for God first, friends second and self-last.

To Lyn that is what GFS is and it is how Lyn lived her life by putting God First. For Lyn at the heart and centre of GFS was God. She did it all for God and to bring and let others especially woman and girls know of God's Love and to know that Jesus died for our sins and our salvation.

Second to Lyn was being a good friend and that is what she was. Lyn was a very special person who, in her busy life, always had time to listen to your story, was caring and loving. She could always come up with a bright idea when you needed help with a GFS programme. She was a great leader and a good friend. She was kind, strong and an amazing role model. Lyn was a friend to all who knew her.

The last letter S in the letters GFS stands for self-last. And that is exactly Lyn, she was always putting God and others first. When Lyn became unwell many did not know how sick she was. But that is how Lyn wanted it. She didn't want us to worry and fuss over her. She just wanted us to live our lives and be kind and good to each other and to serve our Lord. She was an example of a gentle yet strong, kind, loving and generous lady.