

## ***Slovenian Cultural Work***

In the late 60's mum also learned to drive and got our first Holden and became a ward assistant at Royal Park. For which she had to sit an exam later on. As she gained more confidence she did a modelling course with Elly Lukas, made commercials for TV and paraded clothing and millenary. She regularly competed in the Royal Melbourne show doll competition and cake making displays. A few years later she did a house designer course, which prepared her for her role as, "housekeeper "at Royal Park Psychiatric Hospital. This entailed her having, seventy-five workers who looked after the premises of Parkville Hospital and its accompanying wards. She also redesigned Royal Park's administration premises and doctors' houses. She was entrusted with writing reports, making major purchases and decisions, ideas for wards and accommodation and the hiring of new staff.

In 1966 we moved to Turner Street, Pascoe Vale South. Mum was heavily involved in directing, producing and performing in Slovenian plays of which there were many. Her involvement on the Slovenian committees from late 50's to late 80's saw her hosting gatherings, participating at Ozanam House in North Melbourne and Moomba Parades as well as parading in religious festivities.

Gathering in our National costumes was such a sense of pride for Slovenians. It gave us a feeling of togetherness and belonging to a rich cultural land. Mum never ever would say she was from Yugoslavia; it was always Slovenia. Exhibiting Slovenian costumes and culture with my brother and myself in tow wherever she could. My personal favourite was in Sunbury where religious banners were displayed and carried with about 50 - 60 Slovenians in full costumes with their families, children up front, adults behind.

Mum, a woman with a mission, she was always busy, with working for the club or crocheting and knitting garments at night for people she barely knew. She was getting a reputation for her crocheting even making me a pearl encrusted wedding gown with crocheted veil. She made a beautiful dress and asked by Toni Lamond (a popular cabaret singer) to make a dress for her. Of course my brother and I were taken anywhere Slovenian culture was on display, in our National costumes, which she made. She had later helped to set up the pensioner club at Father Basil's and would relate human-interest stories about the events to me at home. I remember one account of how two, lonely people met in their 80's and decided to get married. It was also Father Basil who was my brother's sponsor for his Confirmation with special permission from the Pope, of which our family was proud.

During this time in the 70's mum and dad had a lot of problems with my brother who unfortunately found education too easy, passing without even trying. He became addicted to alcohol and bad company. The decision was made for him to go to the army, but he had flat feet and was unacceptable in the Australian army. The Yugoslav army had no such problem accepting him and he was enlisted. It stopped his drinking and he came out in 1978 looking fit and terrific.