

Miss Australia Re-union Luncheon

Twelve past Miss Australia's attended an 'Miss Australia Re-Union Luncheon' at The National Museum of Australia, ACT on the 20th October 2005. Over 100 invited guests helped to celebrate The Spastic Centre 60th Diamond Anniversary and the Launch of the CP Foundation.

Marelle Thornton, OAM, Chairperson of The Spastic Centre, spoke about how, "The Miss Australia Quest/Aards program not only raised money but was pivotal in gaining the attention of a community that may otherwise be unaware of the needs of people with cerebral palsy. The determination and attitude of the entrants will never be forgotten".

Some of the comments made during the luncheon:

Kathryn Hay, Miss Australia 1999, now a State Labor politician in Tasmania said, "the best thing was meeting the people with disabilities and their families".



Twelve 'Miss Australia's' showing how it was done.



Peter Fortune and Gay Clarke.

Gay Clarke (nee Walker), Miss Australia 1972, is now a barrister and an associate professor at the Queensland University of Technology and definitely has a great sense of humor. "I'm a blonde lawyer!" she said with a laugh, proving that that our Miss A's not only were beauties but they were intelligent, articulate young women.

Mary-Ann Lewis (nee Koznjak), Miss Australia 1984, was Canberra's own Miss Australia and her parents still live in Palmerston in the ACT. Mary-Ann went on to head the public relations arena of

several national companies and now runs her own business in Sydney with her husband Mike.

Margaret Dowling (nee Tierney), Miss Australia 1995, works for a pharmaceutical company in Sydney and is expecting her second child. She is also the sister of two of the 'Human Nature' boys and like her brothers, has a marvelous singing voice and sang at the luncheon. Margaret spoke to the media and said, "that the Awards were never intended to be a beauty contest, the sexism was something put on it rather than something that it generated itself".

Eleanor Duff (nee Morton), Miss Australia 1980 said, "it had been an honor to hold the title, a constant in my life".

Margaret Kelly (nee Rohan), Miss Australia 1967, along with Sheree Dell-Primmer, Miss Australia 2000, shared in the cutting of the cake to mark this special event and to reminisce over the past 50 year span



Mary-Ann Lewis and Judith Geppert.

of the Quest/Awards. Marelle Thornton, assisted by Margaret Reid, patron of The Spastic Centre in the ACT, presented each Miss Australia with the prestigious "Ball and Chain Award", for their dedication and achievements.

Fundraising by entrants, families and friends have raised in excess of \$90 million throughout Australia, monies assisting children and adults who have cerebral palsy. Marelle said that at the launch of the CP Foundation, which had taken place at the 'Starry Starry Night Ball' in Sydney, that the goal was to reach \$50 million in the next five years for research into CP.

Those who attended the Re-Union Luncheon were adamant that future events, such as this, is to be ongoing, as this unique group of women are an integral part of Australian history,



Eleanor Duff and daughter Lucy.

Now to be immortalized in the archives, for future generations to view and remember, The National Museum of Australia has acquired the Crown worn by the event winners.

Starting in August 2006, this crown along with gowns, tiaras, sashes and many other valuable items of memorabilia, all generously donated by many past Miss Australia's, will commence a traveling 'Miss Australia Exhibition'. Starting in Brisbane, then on to Newcastle, Sydney, Western Australia and Victoria.

Sophie Jensen, one of the senior curators at the Museum has been busy speaking throughout Australia to many participants, organizers and staff who were involved with The Quest/Awards during its 50 year's history.

The luncheon drew a large media contingent many photos were published in the ACT, Sydney and Regional Newspapers. WinTV in Canberra and Rural NSW broadcasted footage on the evening news and the front page of The Canberra Times had the colored photo of our 13 Miss Australia's.

Gerry Walters



Rob White and Kathryn Hay.



Margaret Dowling gives us a song.



Lynne Cosgrove and Kerry Doyle.



Mary-Ann Lewis and Margaret Reid.



Compere for the Luncheon
Suzie Elelman.

