

Mother's Day Classic founder passes, leaving an outstanding legacy for breast cancer research and awareness

Mavis Robertson co-founded the Mother's Day Classic, which has raised \$24.3 million to date and become a national event involving hundreds of thousands each year

Wednesday, February 18 2015

It is with great sadness that the Mother's Day Classic and Women in Super (WIS) announce the passing of Mother's Day Classic co-founder, Mavis Robertson AM. Ms Robertson, who died yesterday in Melbourne aged 84, was the driving force behind establishing what has become Australia's largest fundraiser for breast cancer research, the Women in Super Mother's Day Classic.

There will be a special tribute to honour Mavis at each of the Mother's Day Classic capital city events, to be held on Sunday May 10.

With Mavis's leadership, the group Women in Super was established in 1994. The group made a commitment to assist women and decided to raise funds and awareness in support of breast cancer research. Mavis suggested organising a run/walk event and with her persistence, the drive of her co-founder Louise Davidson and the hard work of Women in Super volunteer committees, the Mother's Day Classic began.

Mavis and Louise have always been incredibly proud that under the management of Women in Super volunteer committees the Mother's Day Classic has grown from modest beginnings as a walk in the park, into a major national community event attended by more than 130,000 men, women and families across Australia.

Since it began in 1998, Mother's Day Classic has contributed \$24.3 million to the National Breast Cancer Foundation's research program. In that time breast cancer 5 year survival rates have increased to nearly 90%.

Mother's Day Classic co-founder and national chair, Louise Davidson, said: "Mavis made an extraordinary contribution in so many areas of life. Her strong commitment to improving outcomes for women diagnosed with breast cancer led to the formation of Mother's Day Classic. We will miss Mavis deeply, both personally and professionally."

A strong achiever in public life, particularly in superannuation and women's issues

The Mother's Day Classic was one of many lifetime achievements for Mavis Robertson. Mavis had an extraordinary impact on the promotion of equality for women both in their health, retirement savings and their rightful place in the decision making forums.

Mavis had also been a Trustee of the National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF) and National Chair of Women in Super. In 2011, her contribution to breast cancer research was acknowledged by NBCF with the establishment of the Mavis Robertson Fellowship to recognise the achievements of a female cancer researcher early in her career.

She was also an integral part of many superannuation industry initiatives including being a founding member of the Conference of Major Super Funds (CMSF); Australian Institute of Superannuation Trustees (AIST); Women in Super; and the Australia Council of Super Investors (ACSI).

In a career that spanned more than six decades in the union movement and superannuation, she was a vocal advocate on women's issues and retirement, helping drive legislative changes that improved retirement outcomes for all Australian women, particularly those on low incomes. She mentored many of today's senior female figures in superannuation and she fought hard to ensure that women from all levels of the industry were well-represented on boards, committees and at industry events.

In 1994, she was awarded membership of the Order of Australia for her services to the superannuation industry.

Mother's Day Classic co-founder and national chair, Louise Davidson, said: "We are all in awe of her vision, ambition and drive in establishing and building what has become a calendar must-do for thousands of families, friends and community groups, who revel in a festive event that supports a serious cause - funding research into breast cancer.

"Mavis was still an active and inspiring member of the Mother's Day Classic national committee, driving new and exciting initiatives. Her energy and presence will be much missed."

Women In Super Chair, Cate Wood said: "Mavis was a visionary with incredible drive who was instrumental in the establishment of many institutions focused on the good governance of the not for profit superannuation sector."

"Mavis was the exemplar of a good citizen, dedicating her intellect and energies to the benefit of others. She leaves a legacy of institutions which will continue to work for the rights of women and achieving a dignified retirement for all working people," Ms Wood said.

Mavis is survived by her son Peter, her daughter in law Marjorie and grandchildren Alec and Molly.

For more information on the national event Mavis Robertson co-founded, go to www.mothersdayclassic.com.au

Contacts

Kathryn Britt

0414 661 616

mailto: kbritt@mothersdayclassic.com.au