

5/11/14

Our Lila,

We shifted down to 46 Carol St, in 1945 from Mornington.

The house was owned by Anthony Joseph who was married to a lady called Ruby Zmurid Peters, She was dads niece.

They let us have the house at a pepper corn rental, which was just as well because at that time we didn't have many peppers.

Our next door neighbours were the Joseph family and our cousins, their children, were Richard, Fareed, Lola, Jameel, Lila and Yvette.

We lived in each others houses and went to school together.

Leila left the convent school and went to Otago Girls High School. That was a big no no at the time, but Leila insisted despite the opposition from the catholic nuns and priests.

It proved a wise decision and enabled her to have a great education.

Each evening as soon as my sister Rona and I finished our evening meal, we went straight over to the Josephs house where they were found to be saying the family rosary. Needless to say we always got roped in. They were often prayers for the shuramoota Susie Hurring who lived next door. Not the prayers did much good because her business was booming.

Across the road we had our club rooms. It was in the cellar of mr and mrs Johns at 64 Carroll St. Myself, Rona, Lila, Greeta, Yvette, Franki Joseph and Jack Kelly had a gramophone and a few records and we would dance and laugh the night away. On Saturdays we would all meet there, have a couple of drinks and head off to the town hall dance. We were all happy growing up together and our children are all carrying on the friendship. Long may it continue.

Not many of the Lebanese children went on to secondary school or tertiary education when we were growing up. At that time there were no Lebanese lawyers, doctors or dentists so we were also very proud when Lila became one of the communities first professionals. It really encouraged other parents to give their children further education and go on to university.

So Lila in her own quiet way encouraged many people to improve themselves. The education we were receiving at St. Josephs and Christian Brothers was really sub-standard so Lil's courage to leave her school and enrol in Otago Girls High School was really a brave move for her and her parents. When my wife Moira passed away, I just had to keep moving and travelled to Dunedin constantly. Lila and Ron Taylor took me under her wing and helped me through a very difficult time for which I am eternally grateful.

When Ron passed away I had the privilege of saying a few words at St. Bernadette church. I had the great comfort of knowing my father Fareed Fukrey al Arab helped build that church, so in some small way I felt he was thanking Lila and Ron in advance for what they would do for me more than 70 years later.

I hope these few words tell you of my admiration for the Taylor and Josephs families.

Cousins, neighbours, friends, and school mates ... thats not a bad package. As ever, cousin Butch.