

# JEMIMA NORMA O'CONNER 1945-

JEMIMA was born on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1945 at LAUTOKA in FIJI. She was the eldest daughter of WILLIAM ( Bill ) O'CONNOR and JANE O'CONNER (nee CAMPBELL) although her father from his previous marriage to CAROLINE PICKERING had two daughters, ELIZABETH and EMMA (RATA). She was later to have five sisters; AMELIA (MILLY), DOREEN, SOPHIA (SO), MARGARET and LILLY.

She was born in the Colonial Sugar Refinery's (CSR) compound close to the Sugar Mill near the shore at LAUTOKA. Her father was a blacksmith for the sugar mill and so lived in the compound, which was part of the employment. JEMIMA has some vivid memories of life there, particularly the delivery of block ice for use in the ice box, and the fact that milk was delivered to the door and came in churns.

It was ladled into jugs for the occupants. She also has vivid memories of playing with all the other children in the compound, particularly her cousins who lived in the immediate vicinity.

In 1951 she went to the CSR School as an infant, but at about this time her father BILL had a little altercation with regards to the fitting of "fly screens" to the houses of white workers only, and so he resigned from CSR having started as an apprentice at the age of twelve, and in 1952 the family moved to the capital SUVA. It then transpired that the CSR did in fact decide to fit "fly screens" to all CSR houses, but by then BILL had got a job at the SUVA ship yard (Bish Ltd).

They first moved into a house in Gordon Street in 1952, but in 1954 moved a short distance into a house in Augustus Street where they remained until 1959. During that time JEMIMA went to the Girls

Grammar School. The Boys Grammar and the Girls Grammar were two separate Schools so work began at Veiuto to build a Co-Ed School. This was completed in 1959 when both Schools moved in. It was called Suva Grammar.

All JEMIMA'S Aunts and Uncles were living in SUVA at this time and so she went to school with all of her first cousins. Obviously not in the same class, or for the boys, in the same school, but they were all about the same age and so saw each other and mixed and met up regularly. She did however have two or three cousins usually in the same class.

Of the teachers, she still remembers a few; Miss Naylor was the Headmistress of the Girls Grammar, whilst the Headmaster of Suva Grammar was first Mr Clayton and then Mr Webb. Of the teachers, she remembers Mrs Madams (Music), Mrs Eden (General Science and Maths), Miss Mansell (Hockey) and Miss Marshal (English and Geography).

JEMIMA was at this school from 1959 until 1961. It was also at this time that BILL bought land at DELAINAVESI and built a house on it. It was to remain the family home until the mid 1990's when it was sold. Before that though, it had an extension added, built by BILL, for DOREEN and her then husband, ANTHONY "Taka" NEWTON, to live in.

In 1961 JEMIMA left Suva Grammar, mainly on account that the school grant that BILL and JANE received was terminated, and so she studied at the Derrick Technical Institute during 1962. She then gained employment with the Government, first with the Secretariat, where for a little overtime she was in a pool of typists that recorded the days proceedings in Parliament for Hansard (1963-1964), and then in the PRO (with a Mr Hackett) until mid 1965. She then took a job as a secretary with the Solicitors Monro, Warren, Leys and Kermode, where she remained until she married TERRY MEADEN in 1966.