



AUSRAPID MEDIA RELEASE

It is with great sadness we advise that Marie Little OAM passed away peacefully Sunday 17th August after a short battle with cancer. Marie was surrounded by her adoring family.

Wayne Bird and I attended the Marie Little OAM Shield on Sunday 17th August at the Waverley Netball Centre where she was honoured for her massive contribution through AUSRAPID/SASRAPID of people with an intellectual disability. It is serendipitous that Marie has passed away on the day that she was remembered for the significant contribution she has made to sport for people with an intellectual disability, particularly netball – her passion.

She was truly delighted and honoured when the Netball Championships was officially named in her honour last year – Marie Little OAM Shield. The entire AUSRAPID movement was founded by her and was based initially on netball and integration. She was dogged in her determination to have Australian sport include all participants based on their ability and choice. Netball was the shining light from 1982-1995 demonstrating how easily a sport could be inclusive. AUSRAPID was then able to showcase this model far more widely to other National Sporting Organisations with inclusion now more prominent today. When Netball Australia launched their new inclusion strategy in 2012, Marie could not have been prouder to have her name attached to the inaugural National Netball event.

AUSRAPID has also established a Marie Little OAM Scholarship to provide support to an athlete each year to reach their potential. Marie was involved in establishing the wording behind the criteria and was very comfortable that AUSRAPID was in good hands moving forward with Wayne Bird as President and with the calibre of Board Directors.

Marie founded SASRAPID in 1982, encouraged the establishment of other like organisations in NSW, VIC, QLD and WA in the ensuing years, founded AUSRAPID in 1985 and presided until retirement in 2011, advised government departments in the late eighties, was successful in securing grants to build an AUSRAPID secretariat, was one of the founding Executive Committee Members of INAS-FID, International Sports Federation for people with an intellectual disability 1985-2011. Became the first female Member at Large elected to the International Paralympic Committee in 1993-1997 and lobbied furiously for the inclusion of athletes with an intellectual disability into the Paralympic Games on a full medalled basis. She was also the first female President of the Australian Paralympic Committee in 1996 and was awarded an Order of Australia medal in 2006.

When she retired from her public roles in 2011, she volunteered more time to Anglicare and reading in the local primary school.

While she achieved so much for others, she was a loving daughter, sister, Mum, Grandmother, auntie and most of all loyal friend with a wicked sense of humour and fun.

When such a light is extinguished, it behoves all of us to ensure that the legacy lives on. We should never forget the massive contribution made by those who have gone before us. Marie fought for the rights of people with an intellectual disability in every facet of her life, from local to international level and often was the only person prepared to do so. The success of Marie's work is evident throughout Australia and her vision has been a revelation to the development of sport for people with a disability in this country and throughout the world.

A life dedicated to others and if I was to highlight one of her many traits it would be her RESPECT of humanity at all levels.

Rest peacefully Marie!