

Order of proceedings

Beginning at 2pm Agora Theatre, La Trobe University, Bundoora campus

Introductory comments – Michael P Zann

Tribute to the life of Richard Zann – Dr Michael Clarke

Tribute to the life of Eileen Zann – Delcia Fulloon

Tribute to the life of Eva Zann – Petrea Cahir, Mikala Tai and Louise Osborne

Family tribute – Professor Leon Zann

The University and the community – Vice-Chancellor Professor Paul Johnson

Community tributes – including Thomas George, MLC; representative from the Cancer Council and others.

Conclusion – Judd Bovell on behalf of Chris Zann

Benediction – University Chaplain, Peter Leslie

Friends and family are invited for refreshments at the John Scott Meeting House. *(Please consult ushers for directions.)*

Individual tributes to family members can be made in the form of donations to the following:

- Zann Family Scholarship Foundation
- Birds Australia
- Cancer Council
- Beyond Blue

Please switch off mobile phones and pagers during the service.

Memorial Service

Richard, Eileen and Eva Zann



Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.

How great Thou art

La Trobe University
Friday, 20 February 2009

Richard Alexis Zann

RICHARD ZANN, who died tragically with his wife Eileen and daughter Eva in the Kinglake fires on Saturday 7 February, was a highly respected teacher and ornithologist with an international reputation for his work on bird behaviour. He was born in 1944, the son of the late Leon Zann and Mrs Gwen Zann, who still lives in Casino, northern NSW. Richard was educated at Casino Marist Brothers and Woodlawn College.

He joined the Department of Zoology at La Trobe University in 1972, following an Honours degree in Zoology from the University of New England and Ph D at the University of Queensland under the mentorship of Jiro Kikkawa. His thesis studies probed aspects of the evolution of behaviour and vocalisation in grassfinches, setting his perspective to a combination of penetrating field studies and patient and disciplined laboratory investigation that were to characterize his career, and to mould the attitudes of his graduate and honours students over the ensuing 36 years.

Richard became a leading authority on the Zebra Finch, one of the most popular birds in aviculture and which had paralleled canaries and the budgerigar in being domesticated and producing numerous colour variants. It had also become very popular for experimental studies on behaviour.

However, rather little was known about this key species in the wild, and Richard initiated long-term field studies to settle theoretical questions about 'how the Zebra Finch worked' in its natural environment, as vital background to making sense of laboratory studies published in many parts of the world. Additionally, he was able to pose further probing questions for investigation.

Richard was particularly interested in the development of song, and his early finding that young males learned much of their song from their father during a critical period of development had far-reaching implications in the wider arena of kin recognition and learning.

His string of research papers in the leading journals in his discipline led to his magnum opus, a 335 page monograph on the Zebra Finch published by Oxford University Press, and integrating his own work firmly into the massive corpus of earlier literature. Rightly, it has become a classic. In recent years, he had extended his research interests into the sound repertoire of another amazing Australian bird, the lyre bird.

When the then Professor of Zoology, Ian Thornton, initiated a series of expeditions to investigate the biota and colonization patterns of the Krakatau archipelago in the early 1980s, Richard was a 'natural' to lead investigations on the birds, and later coordinated the vertebrate data from this important research exercise in biogeography very effectively.

His citation for the award of the D.L. Serventy Medal of Birds Australia for 1998, Australia's most prestigious accolade for ornithologists, included tribute to his significant contributions toward knowledge of Zebra Finches and Krakatau. Commenting on his Krakatau work, the citation noted: 'These studies have placed Krakatau alongside the Galapagos Islands in the annals of island biogeography.'

Richard was also a key figure in setting up and developing the La Trobe Wildlife Sanctuary, a key teaching and research facility for the University and environmental resource for the wider community. He chaired the Academic Board's Wildlife Reserves Management Committee throughout most of the 1970s and '80s, until 1994.

However, Richard was not simply a cloistered researcher. He was a dedicated family-man devoted to his wife Eileen and children Christopher and Eva. Generations of undergraduate students have followed his lectures and laboratory classes, and his high rankings from student surveys reveal the respect and liking that a good teacher can foster.

He had an unusually perceptive appreciation of statistics and was THE first person to whom many graduate students took their problems in experimental design and analysis. His patient advice, sometimes involving considerable time and effort, was always given willingly and improved the quality of research well beyond his immediate spheres of interest.



Eileen Ann Zann

EILEEN ZANN was born in the United Kingdom in 1946 to parents Harold and Irene Hodson and they all moved to New Zealand when she was five years old. Eileen was a much-loved only child and in her young years she excelled in music and dance. Her dancing talents were well-recognised and she was offered a scholarship to go the United States to study dance. She turned this down and joined the New Zealand Ballet Company.

Eileen also had an adventurous spirit and moved to Australia, where she enrolled at the University of Queensland to embark on a teaching career. This move had a profound effect on her life – this is where she met Zoology PhD student Richard Zann, the love of her life.

They were married at St John's Catholic Church at Evans Head on December 29, 1970. Shortly afterwards Richard was

appointed to a teaching/research position in the Zoology Department at La Trobe University and the pair settled into married life in semi-rural Hurstbridge, Eltham and Whittlesea before building their dream home at Kinglake.

Eileen bore a son, Christopher Anthony, on July 10, 1977, and a daughter, Eva Adelaide, arrived on March 9, 1982. Eileen also continued her love for ballet, conducting her own ballet school in Whittlesea for over ten years. She then taught at the Debbie Balm-Forth school of Dance at Kinglake for six years.

Her love of children and teaching never left her and she was also an emergency teacher at many of the district's primary schools. In her later years she devoted herself to voluntary work.

Eileen was not only a talented pianist and dancer but also a very keen artist, with many of the fruits of her artistic labours displayed around the home. She also sold the odd well-composed and tasteful landscape oil painting, had an eye for beautiful fabrics and was always dressed in an elegant style.

Her biggest priority was her family and she was devoted to Richard and her children. Eileen lost her beloved parents at an early age but she was much loved by her extended Zann family as a daughter-in-law, sister-in-law and aunt.

Eileen loved nature, picnics and the beach. The yearly pilgrimage to Evans Head in northern New South Wales allowed her to share valuable time with family and friends. She was very adventurous, given that she suffered double vision, excruciating headaches and the side effects of prescribed medication for thyroid and other troubles. However, these obstacles never stood in the way of evening walks to the Evans Head lookout with her husband and children, swims at the beach with family, walks into the national park to admire the flora and fauna, and listening to and identifying the calls of the birds.

Eileen thoroughly enjoyed times around a picnic table, especially if all her family were gathered. She was very proud of her clever husband, handsome son and beautiful daughter. Eileen also took delight in cosy chats and shopping for special soaps, creams or perfumes to give her loved ones. She was a gentle soul, kind, thoughtful and considerate.

While her son Christopher has now lost his immediate family, he remains a much-loved grandson, nephew and cousin within the family that Eileen loved so much and this would give her comfort to know he is safe.

Eva Adelaide Zann

EVA ZANN was a premature baby, born in March 1982 and from the moment she took her first breath, was a fighter with a strength of character all admired. Eva earned her middle name, Adelaide, from her much-loved paternal great grandmother and had inherited her mother's beauty and style.

She went to the Middle Kinglake Primary School and finished her secondary education at Eltham College, where she made lifelong friends. She attended RMIT and Monash University to study public relations, which she relished and excelled in, being awarded a university prize for her outstanding work in her final year.

Eva also had an adventurous spirit. For her work placement during her PR studies, she gained a position with a PR company in Fiji, where she was responsible for the promotion of a healthy living project for the national milk company. Eva's love for PR work was well recognised and she began to show her natural flair at the Cancer Council, where she was a valued member of the public relations team.

Eva loved to travel. She thoroughly enjoyed visiting friends in Hong Kong, staying with her brother in London, meeting relatives in New Zealand with her parents and exploring parts of Western Australia with her Auntie Leonie. She was planning to travel to France next year.

Eva was a delightful young lady who was much loved by all her family and her greatest love was her family. She was devoted to her mother and father and her relationship with her only sibling, Christopher, was very close. A very special place in her heart was her father's previous home on the NSW Northern Rivers. Eva loved visiting her Grandmother, who is now 92 years old, and her Dad's brothers and sister and their families.

Every year of her life Eva spent Christmas at her father's old family beach house at Evans Head. It was at Evans Head that Eva's love for flying came to light. Visiting the local aerodrome for the annual air show was always high on her list of holiday activities. Eva was excited and thrilled seeing the land and sea from on high and was particularly impressed when her friends in Melbourne bought her a flying lesson for her birthday one year. She regularly jumped aboard small aircraft, most recently on a joy flight circling Rottneest Island, off Perth. As luck would have it, she was offered a free second flight – and a happier girl you would never find.

Eva valued her time at the beach because it allowed her to do the things she really enjoyed, such as swimming, snorkelling, walking and spending precious hours getting to know all her cousins. Eva had started designing and creating her own fashions and sewing lessons were taking on new meaning as she persevered with the same tenacity she used to approach most difficult tasks.

Earlier this year, Eva decided it was time to move out of home and she found a flatmate and was about to move when her life was cut short by this tragedy. Like her Dad, Eva was a very humble person. She would be amused, even shocked, by so many friends and colleagues here today celebrating her life. Her gentleness, compassion, sense of humour and cheeky spirit filled everyone's hearts with love for her. Eva Adelaide Zann was such a genuine, unassuming person that it was hard not to love her and she will be sadly missed.

