

AN ADDRESS TO SHORLINE COMBINED PROBUS CLUBS

BY

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WIFE OF THE GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA

Sunshine Recreation Centre

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Thank you for inviting me to talk to you today about my role as wife of the Governor of Tasmania. I am often introduced as the wife of the Governor of Tasmania. It felt quite strange and old fashioned at first, especially as in a previous life, I used to be introduced as Head of The Friends' Junior School, which was quite self-explanatory and made no reference to being wifely or otherwise. "But what does a Governor's wife do?" people say. And, I have to say, it was a question that occupied my mind a great deal at the time of my husband's appointment. Wives and mistresses of the Governors of Tasmania have been many and varied and perhaps, with the exception of Lady Jane Franklin, mostly relegated to a post scrip to the history of Governors.

Decorating the hall, leading from the side entrance to Government House, are photos of past governors beginning with Lt Gov. Collins. There is no sign of Lt Gov. Paterson who was in charge of the North of the state in those days. There was great rivalry

between these two which still manifests itself today, 200 years later, in the rivalry between north and south. Nor is there any sign of the spouses of any of the Governors. Walking past those photos on my first day as “wife of the Governor of Tasmania” I remember thinking, “where are all the women? why are they invisible?” – for I know for a fact that most of these governors had a great deal of support from their spouses. Jane Franklin, Teresa Hamilton to name just two.

On 2nd April 2008, when my husband was appointed the 27th Governor of this state, my official title became wife of His Excellency the Governor of Tasmania. Being the wife of the Governor is a curious role. You are not employed by anyone. There is no job description. But at the same time there are protocols and official duties that you are expected to perform. There are also varied and diverse, unarticulated community expectations, and care must always be taken to ensure that appropriate community involvement does not create a perception of arrogant intrusion into the Governor’s Constitutional role. Those expectations make you more than a volunteer but at the same time you do not have the benefit of the usual workplace environment so you only get to be noticed, or know how people think you are performing, if you “muck up”, by which time of course, it’s too late. These were my thoughts as I started out in this role on 2 April 2008.

So, I looked to history for inspiration and past role models and unearthed stories of many spirited, resilient resourceful women who contributed significantly to the establishment of Tasmania, and who deserved to be recognized. Not all the early Governors brought their wives to Tasmania. Some had mistresses as well as wives and treated both very poorly. Some wives responded by behaving likewise. I found that *even if I did “muck up”*, anything I could possibly achieve, would pale into insignificance beside the wife of Lieutenant Governor Murray, who held office between 1810 and 1812.

It appears that Mrs Murray took a lover and was caught by her husband in a compromising position with the Inspector of Public Works. A duel was fought, no one was injured and the Murrays separated. Mrs Murray then went off to live with a judge whom her husband had once imprisoned and who was described by Governor Macquarie as “much addicted to drunkenness and low company, totally ignorant of the law and a very troublesome and ill tempered man”¹.

Mrs Murray eventually returned to her husband only to be dispatched again after Governor Macquarie in NSW complained to his Lieutenant Governor about “the very unjustifiable step you have adopted of taking back ... your wife ... after being yourself the publisher to the world of her shameful and abandoned conduct.” Mrs

¹ Alexander ,Alison Governor’s Ladies Globe Press Victoria 1987

Murray then took up with a Mr Kent. Alison Alexander comments, in her book *Governors Ladies*, “All Mrs Murray seems to have contributed to the development of Hobart is a little light relief.” Governor’s wives at that time, says Alison Alexander, *had yet to create a role for themselves!*² They were not regarded as leaders in society.

It was not until Governor Arthur arrived in 1824 with his wife Eliza that things settled down. Eliza was very well behaved and since then the expectation has been that Governors wives will be very well behaved, set high moral standards and be role models for society. Governor Denison’s wife, Caroline Denison 1847 – 1855 became the personification of this ideal so that by 1850’s there was an expectation that the Governor’s wife would “be removed from the common citizens ...and take her place with the upper classes as a social leader with any individuality firmly pushed into private life. She could not initiate anything but merely had to do the duties laid down for her.”³ While Governors wives have been busy over the years creating a role for themselves, in keeping with changing societal expectations, the role of the Governor too has changed and evolved. Until 1825, when the Colony of Van Deiman’s Land was established by Royal Proclamation, and an executive council appointed, Governors had a great deal of power as Administrators, responsible to the Colonial Office and not to a local parliament. But in

² *ibid*

³ Alexander ,Alison *Governor’s Ladies* Globe Press Victoria 1987

1825 that changed when the first steps were taken towards the creation of our first parliament and our Supreme Court. The role of an Australian Governor today is still changing to reflect contemporary views and the role of the Governor's spouse has to be viewed within the context of the Governor's role and responsibilities.

But what is that role and what are those responsibilities. To answer this question we again need to look at history. Australian laws and conventions have their origins in English history and were of course brought to Australia in 1788 by Governor Phillip. For hundreds of years English monarchs were all powerful. They made the laws of the land, and maintained armies to enforce those laws. They raised taxes, waged wars, claimed ownership of land acted as judge jury and executioner although the last task was usually delegated to someone lower down in the pecking order! Up until the mid-17th Century the English monarchs believed that they were divinely ordained but , in 1649 the English Parliament found itself in a struggle with King Charles I, a particularly autocratic chap over the raising of taxes. The end result, as you all know, was that King Charles lost his head, his heir fled to France and England became a Republic under Oliver Cromwell.

However, 12 years later the English asked Charles II if he would return to the throne but on condition that he only make laws

that the Parliament advised him to make. This marked the beginning of the *constitutional monarchy* that exists in the United Kingdom today, and which was eventually exported to the Australian Colonies. So the Queen still makes the laws in the United Kingdom and the Governor, as her representative in the States of Australia, makes the laws in Australia, but only those laws that are passed by the Parliament. And so signing off on the laws passed by Parliament is the first constitutional duty of the Governor.

The second constitutional duty is to head the Administration of the State. This is something that the Governor does, but once again, only with the advice of his or her Ministers who are of course elected members of the Parliament. The Governor presides over meetings with the Ministers, in what is called the Executive Council. The Tasmanian Executive Council meets about once every two weeks and there the Governor issues all kinds of orders, that the Parliament has authorised him to. The Governor acts in a supervisory role, to make sure, that the Ministers are *complying with the law when they ask the Governor to make an order of some kind*. In this way the Governor Heads the administration of the State of Tasmania. So as well as *making laws* the *Governor administers the state* but always with the advice and consent of democratically elected representatives.

It has been a long established convention – one followed by the Queen in England and my husband here in Tasmania – to meet, on a

regular basis, with the Chief Minister – in Tasmania the Premier – to be kept informed of government business. I know that my husband has breakfast with the Premier, about once every two weeks – just the two of them – and they have private discussions. The accepted convention is that *the Governor has the right to be informed and the duty to warn or encourage* his Chief Minister from time to time.

Lastly in the constitutional area, the Governor has what are called Reserve Powers – powers that for centuries the Monarch has been able to exercise generally, to make the Parliament work properly.

The Governor has the reserve power *to appoint or sack a Chief Minister or Premier*. Now if any one party wins a majority of the seats after an election the Governor obviously exercises this reserve power by appointing the Leader of that party as his Chief Minister. That Leader will then advise the Governor who he should appoint as Ministers to form the Executive Council and administer the State. But if there is no clear majority after an election, the Governor has to choose the person, who he thinks will be able to form a majority government, perhaps by entering into a coalition with another party as happened after both the last Federal election and the last State election. Maybe, if there is no party or coalition that can control a majority the Governor will have to call another election but that is a last resort position. In addition the Governor may sack a Premier

who is acting unlawfully – perhaps not following the constitution in the administration of the State, but that is a very rare event.

If the Premier can't get the Parliament to pass a supply Bill and provide the money to run the State, the Governor will step in and see if there is anyone else in the House, who could get the numbers to pass the Supply Bill, and if there is, he can sack the Premier and appoint that person Premier instead. Or if there is no one or no coalition who could get supply through, the Governor could *dissolve the House of Assembly and call a fresh election*.

The Governor's job is to make sure that the Parliament works. It is recognised that there is no limit upon the circumstances in which the Governor may exercise a reserve power except to say that it is the Governor's fundamental duty to safeguard the constitution.

Before I leave the constitutional duties of a Governor I need to tell you about an Act of the Federal Parliament called the Australia Act that was passed in 1986. That Act provides, that although the Governor is the Queen's representative, the Governor is not answerable to the Queen. He is not subject to her direction. The Governor exercises all the powers that the Queen has, independent of her authority or anybody else's authority, unless the Queen is in the State. Now in Tasmania, and I think in most other States, before the

Premier advises the Queen of the name of the person to appoint as Governor, he or she consults the other leaders in the Parliament, so the name that goes forward to the Queen, has the support of the whole parliament. So, in reality, the whole of the parliament appoints an apolitical person as Governor and vests in him or her all the powers and conventions that have stood the test of time for hundreds of years. It has given us peaceful government for a long time and we should be reluctant to change that system even if Australians decide we should become a republic.

So, under the Constitutional Monarchy the Governor's constitutional and administrative powers and duties are clearly set out. But the Governor also has an important role to play in society. It is the duty of a Governor to be, and to be seen to be, a leader of the community which he or she governs together with the Ministers. This leadership role is one that the Governor usually undertakes with her or his spouse and it is this community role that the Governor and I choose to carry out together. I say choose because the role of the Governor's wife, apart from meeting protocols and carrying out official duties and being well behaved, is one she must create for herself. She could in fact choose to do nothing at all.

The joint community role requires the Governor and I to move about the community and by words and deeds give encouragement and support where appropriate, and to generate enthusiasm and

innovation where it is likely to be productive of growth and development. We try to foster optimism, inclusiveness, tolerance and generosity to try and make the community happier, more creative and prosperous. Everybody likes to be thanked, appreciated and encouraged for the things they do to make the society, of which they form a part, a better one. It is the job of the Governor and his spouse to give those thanks and show that appreciation.

The Governor and his or her spouse should identify successes by businesses and individuals in the community and celebrate, and be seen by everyone to celebrate them: this includes academic and scientific successes as well as business, artistic and cultural successes. Public acknowledgement of success is productive of an atmosphere of optimism and confidence in the community which is essential to the material and non-material welfare of people.

However in doing all these things neither the Governor nor his spouse should stray into matters of government policy or political controversy. By word and by personal example the Governor and his or her spouse should maintain and be seen to maintain a set of values and principles that the majority of right thinking people in our community consider appropriate. They must lead by example.

Although Government House rightly attracts public interest and attention and is an important historical building, beloved of all

Tasmanians, its primary role is to provide a dignified place where the Governor and his or her spouse can live, work and carry out their public duties and social responsibilities.

As well as supporting my husband in his community role I have chosen to apply my experience in education and the arts, and to draw on my inner resources and life experience (as a senior) to create, a community role for this 21st Century Governor's wife that I hope is useful, of some substance and contributes positively to a civil society.

My story began in Kashmir India, where I was conceived in January 1947. India was then in the throes of the struggle for independence. My father, a British, Sandhurst-trained military officer, was a Colonel in the 16th Punjab Regiment of the British/Indian Army. My mother had lived in, what was then, India, since the age of three when her father had been reported missing in action. Amidst the violence and rioting, and under cover of the darkness of night my mother, pregnant with me and with 3 other children under the age of nine, made the perilous trip first by train and then on board the Empress of Scotland back to England where I was born in Temple Combe, Wincanton Somerset in October 1947.

In 1948 the decision was made to immigrate to Tasmania where my mother's sister, Veronica Tozer had settled on a farm on the North West Coast. My mother, her three children and baby Frances

accompanied by a governess made the long voyage by sea to Hobart. My father stayed in India and joined us a couple of years later.

After this rather perilous beginning to life, it was my good fortune as a child to live within easy access to Veronica Tozer, my mother's sister. Between the ages of 1 and 8 years she set my compass for life, although I didn't know it at the time, in the way that children do not understand or appreciate what they have, sometimes until they have children of their own. Veronica Tozer was a prodigiously talented musician, a concert pianist and the mother of international concert pianist Geoffrey Tozer. As a knowledgeable and gifted teacher she had a profound influence on my personal and professional life. She surrounded me with music. Music was my inspiration, my consolation and everything in between.

Veronica Tozer believed in me, listened to me, inspired me and challenged me to be the best I could be. Above all she gave me a lode star that has guided me ever since, and that is that valuing imagination and celebrating original and critical thinking, the very things that make us human, promotes initiative and life-long learning.

Such was my aunt's inspirational teaching that by the age of 15 I had my A Mus A and a list of prizes and was performing on ABC radio and Television. Such was my aunt's inspirational teaching that

she osmotically transferred to me the joy of teaching and learning so that after completing my Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, English Literature and History, and after having three children, I completed a Diploma of Education as a mature age student and registered as a teacher. I am still a registered teacher.

Immediately on qualifying as a teacher I was appointed as a general class teacher, and music specialist at Friends' Junior School. After 18 months, I was asked to be acting Head and after a few years, and the birth of my 4th child, I was appointed Co-Head, then Head of Junior School, a position that allowed me to implement the International Baccalaureate Programme for children aged 3 to 12, an academically rigorous programme, that acknowledges the sciences, maths, humanities and the arts as being equally important, and promotes the nurture of curiosity, imagination, creativity, initiative and independent critical and conceptual thinking, as powerful life-long learning tools. As a bonus, in implementing that programme, I learned a lot about managing change.

I was able to pursue my passion for music alongside my teaching career and as I did so I discovered why my aunt and mentor had been such good teacher. I realised that she was herself a learner and that to be a good teacher you had to be a willing learner with a healthy curiosity.

This is the background I bring to my current role. As an educator I believe I have a duty to contribute to the breadth of community understanding, if the opportunity presents itself. My official duties include hosting with my husband, visiting Ambassadors and other significant visitors to the State; hosting receptions for community organisations and for national and international meetings and conferences, such as the Antarctic Treaty Meeting, the Super Science Fellows Symposium, the College of Psychiatrists and so on. I am patron of over 20 organisations.

In addition to the traditional official duties, unlike Caroline Denison, I conduct a programme of my own, making myself available to callers, attending and speaking at external events, such as a memorial for those affected by suicide, opening art exhibitions, launching books, opening conferences, and there is always a speech to be researched and written on such topics as the importance of International Humanitarian Law. In 2010 I delivered the William Oats and Honore Deane Memorial Lectures at UTAS.

Again, in contrast to the Caroline Denison model of a Governor's wife, I like to keep in close contact with other members of my tribe; those who are passionate about music. I continue to sing with the TSO Chorus. I have created opportunities to introduce established and emerging Tasmanian musicians, such as TSO Chorus, Virtuosi Tasmania, and 22SQ to a wide range of local, national and

international guests, and to record in the Government House Ballroom. Each year I have held a choral concert and workshop with conductors and singers of Australia's leading youth choir, Gondwana Voices for school children, especially those who would not otherwise have such an opportunity. While the Governor and I engage older children who visit in a role play about democracy, and hung parliaments, I like to teach the younger ones a Quadrille to dance in the ballroom, to make *their* visit to Government House unforgettable. My experience is that the arts help us to pause a while and connect with each other.

I have also taken on active roles such as the Chair of the Tasmania Antarctic Gateway Working Group, which brings to one table key stakeholders in the Antarctic Sector, including representatives from the three levels of Government, and the Tasmanian Polar Network, representing the business sector. It provides a structure for sharing information across the sector so as to maximise opportunities for strategic collaborations between members that will build Tasmania's Antarctic and Southern Ocean Gateway and Science capability and grow our 180 million dollar Antarctic business. In Hobart there is a critical mass of expertise in Antarctic and Southern Ocean Science, Research, Policy, Logistics and Support.

There is little spare time as for the past 7 years or so I have continued to teach at Adult Education running a parent child music education programme, last week a grandparents class for Seniors week, and a choral singing programme for beginner adults, enabling them to experience the joy of music from the inside out, by preparing a major choral work to sing in the Opera House in Sydney with choral singers from all over Australia, in Chorus OZ.

As an example of a typical week my husband and I returned from a 4 week holiday on Wednesday 18 September. On Thursday morning at 8.30 am we jointly opened a National Conference on Adult Illiteracy and by the end of the first two weeks back we had entertained over 2000 guests at receptions, opened either jointly, or separately 9 conferences, and hosted the Hungarian Ambassador and her family as house guests for three days, including a state dinner. In this special Jubilee Year we are looking forward next month, to the visit of the future King of England, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales and Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall. But although busy, I find the role of the Governor's wife very rewarding, for there are always new and interesting people to meet and new things to learn. Last year there were over 15,500 visitors to Government House and this year on Open Day we shook the hands of 5,000 visitors aged 0 to 95. People, from the very young to the very old, bring the house and gardens to life. And of course none of this

would be possible without the support of the team of exceptional people who make up the Government House Staff.

To do any job well you have to feel fulfilled, challenged and a sense of achievement. Winning the respect of people for *what you say*, and *what you do*, not *who you are* or *how you look*, is what brings satisfaction, reward and I believe happiness. As Cicero, who was a great believer in public duty, said around the year 50 BC, "There is nothing so like anything else as we are to one another..... kindness, generosity, goodness and justice are the deepest ties holding the human community together."⁴ When all is said and done, how we treat each other is the key to success in public life and life generally. Courtesy and respect is to human nature what warmth is to wax. To take people seriously and value them as individuals nourishes their sense of identity and self-worth. But it is not all one way. Engaging with others with both mind and heart makes you feel connected and useful and gives a sense of purpose and well-being don't you think?

To finish I have prepared a 10 minute photo story, a snapshot of my role at Government House, because a picture is worth a thousand words. Accompanying it is a CD I have made of music by Virtuosi Tasmania and 22SQ, recorded in the Government House Ballroom and music by Australian composer Percy Grainger, played

⁴ AC Grayling *The Heart of Things* Pub. Orion Books 2002

by my cousin Geoffrey Tozer, and recorded in London, with the London Sinfonia, on the Chandos label. Thank You.