Perpetual

A lifelong commitment to community: Dallas' giving story

By Perpetual Private
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For Dallas, the desire to actively support her community is innate. She and her sister Marian were raised by parents who were not only active community members themselves, but gave their children the unwavering support and encouragement to do the same. That sense of valuing community follows Dallas throughout her life, shaped in part by childhood experiences – including annual coastal camping holidays, where their parents urged Dallas and Marian to play with whichever children happened to be nearby. It was a simple way of teaching them to connect with people outside their familiar bubble and recognise the value of belonging wherever you are.

Where belonging becomes purpose

Dallas and Marian's community mindedness took on new meaning when they joined their local Girl Guide hut. Wherever there was a Guide Unit, they had a community to be part of. And wherever there wasn't one, Dallas helped create it.

After finishing at teachers college, Dallas spent several years teaching across regional Queensland. In each new place, if a Guide Unit didn't exist, she established one – ensuring women and girls could be part of the international network of women supporting women that she and Marian valued so much.

Her commitment extended far beyond Australia. While travelling on the TransSiberian Railway, Dallas and Marian took a four day detour to Mongolia to help establish the country's Girl Guide contingent. More than 20 years later, the unit still exists. Dallas recently heard the Mongolian Guide Leader speak at an international Girl Guides conference – a powerful reminder of the lasting impact of their efforts.

Dallas and Marian's support of Girl Guides empowers young women to develop as leaders and consider the impact they would like to have on their communities.

Girl Guides Australia's Chief Commissioner, Dr Helen Reid, describes the difference this makes to the young women involved:

"It's a safe space, away from home and school, where they can explore who they are and what difference they would like to make to their communities."

Dallas remains an active member of the Guides community, celebrating 80 years of active involvement and bringing decades of experience that create opportunities for intergenerational learning. The depth of her contribution was recognised nationally in 2013, when both Dallas and Marian were awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for their service to youth through the Guiding movement.

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Dallas is still active in the Guide Guide community, celebrating 80 years of involvement.

Choosing an endowment to continue a family legacy

While supporting Girl Guides both personally and financially has been central to Dallas' life, she has also been committed to giving to other community organisations. Managing numerous donations, however, became increasingly complex. When her credit card expired, requiring her to contact every organisation she supported, Dallas shared her overwhelm with her financial adviser.

It was during that conversation that she was introduced to the idea of philanthropy and structured giving, and establishing an endowment within the Perpetual Foundation. Consolidating her giving meant she could continue supporting the causes she cared about without managing each donation herself.

The flexibility of the endowment allows Dallas to support initiatives both locally in Queensland and around the world, reflecting her broad philanthropic vision. It also honours the people who shaped her values.

"The endowment is not just for Marian and I – it's for our parents."

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Dallas and Marian have had a sense of valuing community since childhood.

Encouraging others to start where they are

Dallas believes in the importance of financial literacy and the value of seeking advice. She encourages others to explore structured giving, regardless of the size of their contribution.

"Often people think that you must have millions to do something that will have an impact, but I actually wish I had done this years ago, because you can start small."

For Dallas, impact is not measured in the size of a donation, but by strengthened communities, empowered young women and a legacy built over generations. Through her endowment, the values instilled in her family – generosity, connection and opportunity – will continue to support communities well into the future.

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