

Dr Ruth Tarn
(Mrs Ruth Radcliff Pike)



Dr Ruth Tarn was one of the people primarily responsible for establishing STARTTS during the early years. As the first Acting Director, she was the kind, strong centre in the middle of a frantic, pioneering refugee service. It was hard to believe that Ruth had returned from retirement to work at STARTTS, because she had so much energy. I was also struck by how intelligent and perceptive she was, by her quiet determination, generosity and sense of humour. When we were concerned about how many clients she was seeing every day, she said, 'Don't worry about me, I'm just an old draught horse who has been brought in from pasture!' (In fact Ruth was a very beautiful ageless kind of woman, with striking blue eyes, and a rather unsettling astute look.)

One of the most important points to about Ruth was her deep commitment to helping others. The pages of her diary were full of appointments for clients, including home visits for people unable to travel to STARTTS. She couldn't bear for anyone to wait for long, and she saw people as soon as she possibly could. She was one of the most generous people I have ever met. I believe that Ruth's genuine caring, wisdom and her depth of experience and understanding were major factors in refugee clients and communities developing a trust in STARTTS.

Ruth also extended her caring and support to the small staff group at STARTTS. Most of us were quite inexperienced in the work, and I think we all felt as if Ruth understood each one of us and cared deeply about us. I think this deep connection, respect and trust between the staff has stayed with STARTTS since 1988 when Ruth held us together as a kind of family. When Ruth passed away, we couldn't believe that she had gone: it was such a loss for all of us who knew her.

On attending Ruth's funeral recently, I heard the beautiful eulogies from her six children (Phillipa, David, Frances, Alan, Diana and Leone), her niece Susan Kaldor, and her friend Nancy Essex. I realised that being such a critical pioneer for STARTTS had only been one of this remarkable woman's achievements. She had been Dux of both her primary school (Gordon Public School) and her high school (Pymble Ladies College). From PLC, she had then studied Medicine at Sydney University,

graduating in 1949 and gaining her registration in 1950.

Ruth's six children were born between 1951 and 1963, and during this period she was also working long hours in a GP practice, and for some of this period also working at Royal Prince Alfred hospital in the evenings. Her husband bought a seven acre farm in Northmead, including a poultry farm, five cows and some pigs, and Ruth worked alongside him in the early mornings and evenings on the farm, even taking responsibility for the farm while he was overseas. She also managed to knit jumpers and make clothes for all her children, and was a wonderful cook.

The next phase of her phenomenal career included working for the School Medical Service, and studying psychiatry at Cumberland Hospital. She had a key role in working at Wysteria House, and in setting up several community health services, including Blacktown, prior to working at STARTTS. There must be countless numbers of people, both clients and colleagues, on whom Ruth had a deep positive influence. Following working at STARTTS, Ruth retired to the Central Coast for a period, but then started working again in various positions including working at Centrelink, and also writing reports about institutions as an Official Visitor.

One of her children described her as rather enigmatic. She was an intelligent, warm, charismatic presence in the room, a passionate beautiful woman. Her generosity and caring for the clients and staff live on in us at STARTTS, in the deep fabric of the organisation. At Ruth's funeral, Susan Kaldor said that Ruth was not here to look after us now, so we all had to look after each other as she would have looked after us. I hope that we can carry on this deep caring, which Ruth gave us, into the future, for both our clients and our colleagues.

This eulogy was written by Robin Bowles, with editing suggestions and information from Phillipa Kemp and Tiep Nguyen. Some ideas from the eulogies at Ruth's funeral have been included, thank you to all of Ruth's family. Robin and Tiep both started work at STARTTS on the same day in 1988 and are both still working at STARTTS. Phillipa Kemp is Ruth Tarn's eldest daughter.

The Reverend
Martin Chittleborough



The Reverend Martin Chittleborough passed away in Adelaide on the 17th August 2014 at 78 years of age.

Martin led a life rich with family, friends, community and the Church. Born in Adelaide in 1936, he was ordained into the Anglican Church in 1961. He served as parish priest in Tailem Bend and Meningie until 1966, when he moved with his wife Anne to Papua New Guinea to take up the position of priest in charge of Agenehambo Parish. In 1969 he was appointed Archdeacon of Northern Papua, a position he held until 1974, and was director of the PNG Christian Training Centre 1973-1976. Following the family's return to Australia in 1976, Martin was priest in charge of the Parish of Waikerie 1976-1978 and served on the National Council of Churches for five years before becoming Rector of St Jude's Church in Brighton, South Australia.

It was during Martin's tenure with the National Council of Churches that he first became involved in working with refugees. He visited several refugee camps in different parts of the world - Palestine, Lebanon, Greece and Thailand. In 1978 he visited Vietnam and saw first hand the devastation of war. In 1980 he visited Cambodia and watched as countless bodies, including those of children, were pulled from mass graves. He later spoke of his terrible feelings of helplessness in the face of such overwhelming misery and injustice. Back in Australia, it was this feeling of helplessness that motivated him to work with others to assist refugees and particularly, survivors of torture. He became an active member of the Indo-China Refugee Association (later to become the Australian Refugee Association) and held the position of Chair of ARA 1984-1985 and c. 1995-2002. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Refugee Council of Australia and became its first Chair, a position he held until 2002. He was also instrumental in the establishment of the Adelaide-based Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS).

Of RACS first 200 clients, 70 per cent had experienced torture. At that time no services existed in South Australia to assist torture survivors. However Martin was aware that groups of doctors and psychiatrists were working to set up services for survivors in Victoria (later to become Foundation House), NSW (later to become STARTTS) and Queensland (later to become QPASTT). Martin was

keen to see something similar established in South Australia and began to gather a group of like-minded people around him. The Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service (or STTARS as it was better known), started life as a loose network of people with a telephone and a photocopier in a back room of the Indo-China Refugee Association. Martin approached Professor Alexander McFarlane, one of Australia's leading experts on trauma and Sandy agreed to become the first Chair of STTARS. They worked together to develop a network of psychiatrists and GPs prepared to work pro-bono to provide services to survivors of torture and trauma resettling in South Australia. Martin left the Parish of Brighton to coordinate the fledgling service as a volunteer and lobby the State and Commonwealth Governments for funding. In 1991 STTARS became an independently incorporated organisation and Martin became the first Director, a position he held from 1991 to 1998.

Martin is remembered by many as a wonderful and inspiring man. Passionate and pragmatic with a capacity for dogged perseverance, his care and concern for others was far-reaching. One of Martin's regular admonitions, "Grasp the near edge," says a lot about his approach to issues. Even though we may not be able to solve all the world's problems, he believed there are always opportunities for doing something positive to help other people change their lives. He had the ability to take a very broad view of a situation, imagine what might make it better, and then clearly articulate that vision, encouraging others to join with him and providing the leadership to make it happen. Martin's gentle humour made light of his achievements but his commitment was total and he never lost sight of his goals. His part in changing perceptions of, and services for, former refugees and asylum seekers in Australia has been significant and lasting.

Martin is survived by his wife Anne and children David and Kirsty, six grandchildren and a great-grandson. STTARS today employs 70 staff across six different program areas and provides services to approximately 1000 survivors of torture and trauma every year.

The author, Bernadette McGrath, was the Director of STTARS from 2002 - 2014.