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Phia's Story

Life Member of the Seahorse Society

by Phia Leselle

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Phia Leselle: I wish that all transgendered people could be as happy as I am ...

All my life I was tortured by the knowledge that I should have been a woman despite having been born male. Despite my inner feelings I married but the marriage did not change my feelings. I told my wife before we were married that I "had a problem". She saw me dressed twice, for about five minutes each time, but would not try to understand and accept my need.

In 1952 I saw a doctor and a psychologist and told them about my feelings but they were unable to help me.

Nonetheless we were married for forty-three years and produced six children. We also have sixteen grandchildren and three (maybe five, I'm not sure) great grandchildren.

In 1952 I saw a doctor and a psychologist and told them about my feelings but they were unable to help me. 1952 was the year Christine Jorgensen was outed as the "first" transsexual in the world. She wasn't, of course, but she was the first to receive world-wide, sensational, publicity.

I worked as a factory maintenance fitter for most of my life, seven days a week. I enjoy the occasional beer but I have never been drunk and I gave my wife and children everything I could afford. Most of the children were taught piano and some went to university. Now they are teachers, engineers and builders. My eldest daughter and two of my sons stay in touch.

I live alone although I have many male and female friends. I am a life-member of the Seahorse Society and have been a member of the N.S.W. Gender Centre for many years.

I am also a member of a number of clubs devoted to other interests such as music, dancing, various sports and swimming. I played football for eleven years but it's hard to play in high heels, so I gave it up. Also because I am now over eighty years old. I am still a licensed fitter and turner, engine reconditioner, welder, boiler operator, forklift driver, panel-beater and spray-painter. I work on cars a lot, reconditioning them and bringing them back to life. I am also an inventor and am working on a new car design which will provide more environmentally-friendly power for less fuel consumption in a lighter engine than any design currently in use.

I am happy now, living as Phia, and I love life. I wish that all transgendered people could be as happy as I am and win their way through the prejudice, transphobia and all the other forms of discrimination so typical of our current society so that they can live the way they want to live, and were born to live.

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The Gender Centre is committed to developing and providing services and activities, which enhance the ability of people with gender issues to make informed choices. We offer a wide range of services to people with gender issues, their partners, family members and friends in New South Wales. We are an accommodation service and also act as an education, support, training and referral resource centre to other organisations and service providers. The Gender Centre is committed to educating the public and service providers about the needs of people with gender issues. We specifically aim to provide a high quality service, which acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.