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Toni's Story

From Boy to Girl to Bride and Beyond

by Toni Thompson

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I was born in 1944 and reared in a small country town called (Boorowa) in N.S.W. I never felt like a normal male or looked like one. I used to get picked on at and after school, being taunted about being too pretty to be a male and also being bashed on a regular basis.

I thought I was in Heaven, at last I saw there were people like me out there who liked to dress as and look like women.

I left home when I was fifteen years of age and moved to Canberra where I lived with my Aunt and Uncle till I was eighteen years of age, then branched out on my own.

I met a man who I saw on a regular basis. He asked me to go to Sydney with him for a long weekend. When we arrived in Sydney he took me to a club (The Purple Onion) in Kensington. It was the first time I had ever seen a drag queen (as we were called in those days).

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I moved to Sydney a year later. I took a job at St Vincent's Hospital, (I worked there for ten years) and started taking hormones to develop breasts and I met a few ladies who had been for male-to-female surgery.

I decided that was what I wanted to do so I saved my money and flew to Egypt to have my op. done. (I had never been outside N.S.W. before let alone up in a plane).

A few months later I went out to Les Girls at Kings Cross. There I met a bouncer who took a fancy to me. We dated for a while, then he asked me to marry him and I agreed. We went to the Catholic Church and asked them to marry us but they said "No ... I was born a male and would die as one". (I told the priest where to put his church.)

We then went to the Church of England (of which my fiancé was a member) and asked them to marry us.

I told the minister about what the Catholic Church had said and he replied that if I had not told him of my gender he would have been no wiser. He couldn't marry us on my birth certificate because it was as male.

He asked me if I had a passport as female (I did) so he said he would marry us using my passport as ID.

When I met his parents and informed them we were going to marry I also informed them of my gender. Within three days his mother and his sister arrived at my door. They asked if they could see my op. I showed them and they have been my mother-in-law's much-loved daughter-in-law ever since.

We had a lovely wedding, all our parents attended and my father gave me away. We lived together for three years until he was unfaithful, and we separated.

My husband and I remain married and I am still close friends with his family and keep regular contact with them.

There you have it ... my life so far, but still lots more to come!

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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.