

Margie Van Zyl (Brookbanks)

(Class of 1972)



Margie van Zyl (nee Brookbanks) was at Epworth 1968-1972. Daughter of Mavis (also an Epworthian) and Walter. She was in Rhodes – a day scholar for Std 6-8; boarder in Std 9 and Matric. Margie was a chapel server, and a member of the choir. As a scholar she used to organise teas for old folk. She always had an affinity for older people.

Really inspired by her grandmother (also an Epworthian – Ellen Cruickshank) who became very physically frail and blind in her old age, and who accepted these frailties with dignity.

Education:

B.Soc. Sc. (Hons) cum laude University of Natal 1977

M A (Soc Sc) UNISA 1981

Work experience included time as a social worker with TAFTA(The Association for the Aged) in Durban, and then having moved to Pretoria to get married, joined the Human Sciences Research Council as a researcher in their Centre for Sociological, Criminological and Demographic Research, focusing on gerontology. She then moved on to a lecturer's position at the School of Business Leadership at UNISA where she worked in the Centre of Management Studies. Having moved back to Pietermaritzburg in 1989, Margie then returned to work in the social work field, firstly in the field of mental health, working with the mentally ill, and then in 1995 back into the field of ageing which has all the while been her choice of vocation.

She is currently the CEO of PADCA (The PMBurg & District Council for the Care of the Aged), a position she has held for the past 8 years. She is also currently serving her second term as the National President of SAAHA (SA Association of Homes for Aged). Her days are filled with inspiring her staff , focusing on leadership development and keeping her pulse on the two frail care facilities, one retirement residence, a block of flats for seniors, and a retirement village that are run by PADCA, as well as the varied community work projects – seniors clubs, home based care for frail elderly in the rural areas surrounding Maritzburg, professional counseling for seniors and their families as they grapple with ageing. She is also actively involved in lobbying and advocacy around ageing issues and has participated in national and international processes of policy development. She has contributed to several international conferences around the globe, most recently presenting a paper on Change in ageing services, telling South Africa's story, to an international conference in Malta. She is passionate about the field of ageing.

Margie has 3 grownup sons. For relaxation she enjoys ballroom and Latin American dancing each week, and travelling when the opportunity arises. She writes:

"My life is so blessed, and for that I give all the glory to God."