

Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP

on the occasion of

Mrs Eunice Santich's 90th Birthday Celebrations

at 22 West Churchill Ave, Munster

on Sunday 13 March 2011

Mrs Santich,

My wife Patricia and I are honoured to be here at your home on this warm autumn day. It is a wonderful to see you surrounded by family and friends who have come together to share in and celebrate your 90th birthday. In particular, having grandchildren and great grandchildren present is a memory that they will treasure forever.

I acknowledge the presence of your many family and friends including Mr Ray Lees, JP and Freeman of the City of Cockburn – a former long standing councillor and mayor of our great City.

When Mrs Santich was born on 14 March 1921 the world was certainly a difference place. It was shortly after the end of the Great War when everyday living was tough and the raising of a family a constant challenge with high levels of unemployment and uncertainty. Thoughts of where the next shilling would come from was on everyone's mind.

Then came the Great Depression, the Second World War, other wars were to follow soon after as families battled years of food shortages, high unemployment and credit squeezes. Hand me downs were normal and going out for a meal almost unheard of in those days.

Many turned their hand to the land growing vegetables, flowers and harvesting fruit from orchards thus enabling some return from working the land and the opportunity to provide food on the table at the same time. The Santich family did just this.

As we know Cockburn has a long and proud tradition of getting things done through hard work and the contributions of families that have assisted in the building of the community. The name Santich is well known within the district and reflected in the naming of Santich Park in recognition of the family and the continuing contribution that many members of the family make to our community.

As we can see, the area around here is moving on from the market garden era into a residential subdivision. If one were to come back in five years from now very little would remain in terms of physical structures to identify it as a former place where people toiled the soil and eked out a survival for their families.

However one thing is certain, the presence of people such as Mrs Santich will be there to tell the stories of the past and through this help to keep alive an aspect of Cockburn's history for family, friends and the community to share.

We will never grow weary of the endeavours and respect we have for those pioneering families and the value they added to our community.

I would now like to read an excerpt from Fred Santich's book titled "A Battler's Experience". It certainly personifies Mrs Santich, his wife.

"The greatest fortune that befell me was when I married Eunice Dent. No better worker, no one more moral, better mannered,

understanding, uplifting when in need, mother of five children and scores of other attributes.

At no time in life have we argued violently, although we may have had our differences in life, at times, admittedly. It has been to her that my life has been made so worthwhile. She has been my inspiration.

She is highly respected by all members of the large Santich family – a fitting tribute to the most respected Dent family, who had pioneered the Jacob's Well area in its early days, where her parents carried on a wheat and sheep farm. But above all she is loved by all of us.”

Mrs Santich; you continue to be an inspiration to your family, your friends and the Cockburn community.

On behalf of the Cockburn community Patricia and I wish you a very happy 90th birthday. Enjoy both today and tomorrow, your actual birthday.

Ladies and gentlemen please charge your glasses – a toast to Mrs Eunice Santich in celebration of her 90th birthday.

Thank you!