

A true artisan

Barbara Kapetopoulos, one of Adelaide's finest, yet unsung, dressmakers reminisces with MELISSA CHRYSS about working as a dressmaker in the heydays of the 60s, 70s and 80s.



One of Barbara's first dresses was for her sister Maria's debut at the Grecian Ball. Photo supplied

When Barbara (Pyrlis) Kapetopolous finished secondary school in the town of Pyrgos, in the Peloponnese she wanted to be a doctor, or better yet, travel to Athens and become a movie star.

“When I was young I sent my photo to the famous film director Nikos Tsiforos. He sent a letter back saying come to Athens and I will make you a movie star. Of course, my father wouldn't allow it.”

In those days, a young girl was meant to stay home and do womanly things - like sew.

But Barbara never wanted to be a dressmaker; to her the

idea seemed pedestrian. “I hated the idea of being a dressmaker, I really wanted to be something else, but in those days a woman had little choice.”

She adds, “I could not even go out without being escorted by my father or brothers.”

However one thing led to another and after she finished high-school she was soon sent off to learn the art of dressmaking.

She was in a class with a whole bunch of other local girls and as it turned out, Barbara was really very good. Her teacher recognised her natural talent; she was able to see a dress then create a pattern and sew it.

After eight months at dressmaking school, Barbara left and refused to make outfits

for anyone but herself and her sister. However people couldn't help noticing her chic outfits and she was always getting requests to create one of her originals.

Barbara's family moved to South Australia and she met her husband Anastasios. “Tasos was very clever and very wise.” Barbara designed and sewed her own wedding dress as well as her sister Maria's both stylish dresses that young brides today would still love to wear.

Both Tasos and Barbara had clothing, textiles and apparel in their backgrounds. Tasos came from a family of haberdashers and sellers of children's wear, whilst Barbara's family were shoemakers.

Soon after she was married, she gave up her vow not to sew

for anyone but her family and started taking orders. Barbara was, and still is, a stunning woman, and it was her innate sense of style combined with her talent as a designer and seamstress that helped her to become one of Adelaide's most sought-after dressmakers.

She designed dresses for school formals, balls and other special occasions, but it was her wedding dresses that proved the most popular with their beading and other intricate details. A bride-to-be could take in a picture of any gown and Barbara would make it to measure.

Such was her talent that several young South Australians saw fit to exploit Barbara's skill. In the early 90s a number of fashion design students

asked Barbara to design and create outfits and dresses for their assessments.

In fact, one incredible woollen dress that Barbara designed and created ended up winning an award and the student was happy to take all the credit!

In later years Barbara taught her husband Tasos how to bead; as she says, “he was greatly skilled and had a great deal of patience” and the two of them worked together creating countless intricate gowns for the Adelaide community.

Today, Barbara is still a stylish and glamorous woman and it is a truly a delight to hear her talk about the dresses that she created. She truly is an artisan.

Article from Neos Kosmos

Picking up the pace

Vicky Kavasilas (Year 4 student), completed her walk to aid awareness and raise much needed funds for the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation. Vicky has never allowed her condition (as type 1 diabetes sufferer) stop or hinder her from involving herself fully in whatever she has set her mind to and is a true inspiration to us all.

BELMORE'S Vicky Kavasilas is just nine years old and is already a seasoned fundraiser.

The youngster says she has no plans to slow down and is actually picking up her pace as she gets her awareness, campaign for the Walk for A Cure to be held at Parramatta Park on October 18, under way.

The event is the Juvenile Diabetes

Foundation's major annual fundraiser.

Vicky was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes two weeks after she was born.

Vicky's mother Helen said her daughter loved to fundraise so people could learn more about the different types of diabetes.

“It's not right for them to compare type 1 and type 2 diabetes”, she said.

Type 1 diabetes, for which there is

no cure, destroys the body's ability to produce insulin, which is needed to convert food into energy.

About 140,000 Australian people have type 1 diabetes, which usually begins childhood or early adulthood. Unlike type 2 diabetes it is not caused by poor diet or lack of exercise.

The long-term complications of type 1 diabetes include blindness, heart disease, kidney failure, amputations and stroke.

Vicky has also thrust herself into fundraisers such as the Jelly Baby Month held in May.

Walk for a Cure at Parramatta Park runs between 8.30 am and 11 am.



There will be children's entertainment until 2pm.

Walks will take place across different locations. For more information visit www.jdrf.org.au