



# Five Minutes With...

## *Linda Alexander*



Patron? A person who gives support to an organisation. Linda Alexander, our Patron, does that in spades! She supports the SA Bridge Association and the broader bridge community in so many ways. A great passion of hers is supporting beginning and inexperienced players to become both more competent and confident.

Linda's bridge journey started over 50 years ago. She and a group of friends took private lessons conducted by John Pick. In 1971, three of the group joined SA Bridge Assoc whose homebase was in Currie Street in the City. Linda recalls evening bridge sessions, two per week and a women's only session on Wednesdays.

'I played on Monday and Thursday evenings and when I stopped working, on Wednesday afternoons too,' she said.

In 1972 Linda and three friends went to Canberra for the Junior Championships.

'Needless to say, we didn't do all that well, but we had a great time,

'This was my first major competition and was the beginning of many interstate and national competitions that were to follow,' she said.

In 1979 Linda along with Liz Page-Hanify, represented SA in the Australian National championships.

'This was followed by many happy years partnering Nicky Robinson.

'Other highlights of national competitions include coming second with Alison Fallon in Women's Pairs in 2002.

Linda is capable in a range of fields and packs a lot into life, both with her family and the community.

She had her hands full when her children were young; her son was 15 months old when her twin daughters were born. Linda is now a proud grandmother of nine and great grandmother to two born in 2023.

Linda's long association with our club has seen her on the Management Committee and in 1974 she was elected Treasurer for a year and then Secretary for the next 20 years. Back in the day, Linda chaired the Women's committee. However Equal Opportunity saw the women's only sessions disappear, giving way to all mixed sessions at the club.



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Linda was a longstanding Bridge Director from 1980 till 2012. In the early 1980s she was pleased to instigate Saturday afternoon social sessions where bridge was played and afternoon tea shared. This became popular until the covid pandemic put pay to the afternoon tea.

Linda was elected Patron Emeritus at the 1986 AGM

'I am greatly proud of this honour and see the role as one of supporting and facilitating the success and furtherment of SA Bridge Association'.

Linda highlights three particular initiatives that she champions: supporting beginners and new members to the club; mentoring beginning and intermediate players; and assisting SA Bridge Association's satellite clubs, Walkerville, Glenelg North and Mt Barker.

In 1997 Linda donated the Patron's Cup. It is awarded annually at the AGM to a player who is new and has worked through the SA Bridge Assoc beginners program that year. The Patron's bridge competition is conducted towards the end of the year and is open only to those who fulfill the criteria.

'In this way our new members are able to experience the fun and excitement of competitions', she said.

Over the years many members have enjoyed and benefitted from mentoring sessions with Linda.

'Bridge has given me much, and in wanting to give back some of these gains, I decided to start mentoring those beginners or intermediate players who approached me for help.

'I arranged to play with them for one month, working with them to gain a greater understanding and play of this wonderful game,' she said.

Linda is a champion for SA Bridge Assoc satellite clubs, which began in 2012.

'I was directly involving in establishing Bridge-on- Torrens at Walkerville. In the beginning, it was very slow to get off the blocks, so to facilitate building a congenial atmosphere for players, I decided to bake scones. To my delight I found these treats hit the jackpot. Over time others brought a plate to share'.

Not only a successful bridge player herself, Silver Grandmaster, she gives so much to enhance and develop the bridge experience of others as mentor, encourager and community developer and builder.

SA Bridge Association is gifted to have such a talented and wonderful hands-on Patron.