



# Five Minutes With...

## *Felicity Smyth*



Felicity always enjoyed playing cards from childhood onwards. Her sister introduced her to Bridge which she loves.

‘When my sister started medicine at University of WA, she used to play auction bridge in the common room. She taught me to count points and take tricks,’ she said.

Felicity in turn played bridge with three friends when she herself was at Uni.

‘However, it wasn’t until I moved to Canberra in 1982 that I decided to learn how to play the game competitively, so I took some lessons at the ACT Bridge Club.

‘From there I was hooked,’ she said.

When it comes to highlights of Felicity’s Bridge journey there are many.

‘I have to say that making the ACT Open team in 1988 was my first real success.

‘I was still very inexperienced, but I had a great time even though we had no chance of winning the event,’ she said.

After moving to Adelaide in 1990 and having a family, she gave up bridge for 20 years to raise the children. However, Felicity did not lose her bridge prowess.

‘When my son, David, wanted to play in the SA Youth Trials in 2013, I decide to try out for the SA Women’s Team.

‘I made the second SA Team with Leonie Clarke as my partner and we were able to make the final only to be the runners up,’ she said.

International opportunities were on Felicity’s horizon.

‘In 2022 Sheila Bird and I were asked to join the Australian Women’s Team to play in the Asia Cup in Jakarta which was very exciting,



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'However, I think the best highlight of my career has been in the 2023 ANC. I was non-playing captain for the SA Women's Team but due to Sue Lusk unavailability, I became the playing captain.

'Together with Therese DeMarco (my partner), Pam Morgan-King, Alison Fallon, Anne Harris and Ingrid Cooke we were able to win the event for SA for the first time since 1983!' Bravo a sweet victory!

Felicity recognizes many benefits of playing bridge including mental endeavour, development of personal qualities and social aspects.

'Bridge is a great way to keep your mind alert and active.

'Hopefully it also teaches you to have patience and humility because you are always going to make errors.

'However, I think the main benefit I have had from bridge is the friendships that I have made over the years,' she said.

At the present, Felicity plays bridge on Wednesday mornings and Thursday nights, as well as the occasional weekend as she is still working part-time.

'However, when I retire, I will probably play three times a week as well as the odd congress or competition,' she said.

Felicity sees great advantages of children learning to play bridge.

'The younger one starts to play bridge, the better understanding one has of the game,' she said.

In fact, Felicity has a passion for furthering bridge opportunities in schools.

'When I was on the SABF Tournament Committee, I posted a document about the benefits of bridge in schools to about 40 high schools and invited them to send a teacher and a student, free of charge, to a one-day introductory session run by SABF.

'Unfortunately, there was not a lot of lead time to the event and it was probably the wrong time of the school year so the response was poor. I also encouraged my son to do his research project on "How to teach bridge".



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'I would also like to have another opportunity to introduce bridge in schools when I retire,' she said.

Felicity has made herself available to participate in pairs or teams with an expert for both SABA and SABF. These are very popular events with both Rookies and more advanced players.

Mentoring and coaching bridge tactics are skills that Felicity has developed.

'I have captained the SA Women's team at the ANC several times,' she said.

Felicity is quite industrious.

'Work, bridge and a large family keep me quite busy just now.

'There is a lot going on in the family at the moment with a number of weddings and engagements.

'I have a 95-year mother who lives in Western Australia and I visit her as often as I can.

'I also like to go to football games. I'm a West Coast Eagles supporter and I also enjoy the cricket.

'Additionally, I would like to be a bit more active in my local parish church', she said.

Felicity plans to work for a few more years and to keep playing a competitive bridge game.

'I am also looking forward to the family expanding! So, retirement will be played a bit by ear.

'When I retire, I intend to play bridge more, do a little voluntary work and hopefully help out with grandchildren.

We wish Felicity well with all her endeavours and thank her for her commitment to bridge and it's flourishing in South Australia.