

Champion of mental illness and addiction – vale Lorraine Wood, South Pacific Private



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Lorraine Wood

The co-founder of one of Australia’s leading treatment centres for mental illness and addiction has died, leaving behind a legacy of hope for thousands of people.

Lorraine Wood founded South Pacific Private on Sydney’s Northern Beaches in 1993, alongside her late husband Bill Wood. She died on August 21, after a long battle with cancer.

Lorraine grew up in an alcoholic family and she believed her life’s work was to heal intergenerational trauma.

“Looking back, I can see how many of my life decisions were shaped by my childhood and being raised by alcoholics,” she said, in one of her final interviews.

“There were times when I was convinced I didn’t deserve happiness and as a result, I battled depression for a large part of my life.

“But luckily for me, my life changed when Bill and I reached out for help.

“Part of our healing was establishing South Pacific Private, so that we could help others to recover from addiction and mental illness.”

South Pacific Private is one of a handful of facilities globally which use the trauma-informed framework developed by Pia Melody at The Meadows Treatment Centre in Arizona.

Celebrities including Michael Phelps, Kate Moss and Tiger Woods have sought help from The Meadows.

The now three-decade relationship with The Meadows began when Lorraine, Bill and then various other family members sought treatment in Arizona.

Inspired by the program, Bill and Lorraine opened South Pacific Private with the aim of sharing its benefits with all Australians.

Since then, it has positively changed the lives of more than 80,000 people – an extraordinary and highly personal legacy.

While Bill sadly died in 2000, Lorraine continued until recently to run the business with her unwavering passion for saving lives and healing families – taking the hospital through expansion from 26 beds to 54 and continually developing the program to incorporate world-leading, evidence-based modalities for the treatment of addiction and mental health conditions.

Lorraine spent her life “daring greatly” long before Brene Brown popularised the concept and she will be remembered for her energy, strength, tenacity, and her humanity.

As an entrepreneur and trail-blazer in a challenging environment for women, Lorraine displayed courage and fortitude.

As a healthcare provider, her compassion for clients, predicated by her own upbringing, ultimately set the tone for her life’s work.

“I love addicts and alcoholics, they are often the loveliest, most sensitive and intelligent people I know,” Lorraine said.

Lorraine’s determination to set a new path for as many people as possible, to use the world’s best practice treatments and to focus on positive outcomes for sustainable recovery, will continue to underpin the hospital’s strategic direction into the future.

The family business will remain just so, with Lorraine’s daughters Frances Hansen and Fleur Wood as directors.

“South Pacific Private plans to continue Lorraine’s legacy, running as it always has, with the same spirit and compassion,” Frances said.

“Mum is forever grateful that we will remain a beacon of hope for all people and their families who are suffering from addictions and mental illness.”

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