

Biography: Eileen McMillan

Eileen was born on the 11th Jan 1956. She came from humble stock in the working class area of Liverpool. Her Father Bill Edwards was a baker and her mother Evelyn was the homemaker. Eileen was the only daughter but she had an older brother Steve. Now there are two types of Liverpool inhabitants they either support the team that plays in **red** or the team that plays in **blue** and Eileen had a lifelong affinity with the red-clad Liverpool Football Club. Her contact with the home town was always sustained however and despite the distance, the Edwards the Foys and the Maddens, though remaining in Liverpool, continue to be an active part of the extended family.

On 14th October 1957 Eileen's Baby Brother Jim arrived to complete this branch of the Edwards family and of course displaced Eileen as the "baby".

In 1963 the family relocated to Hereford and a life time friendship with the Kadwells began.

In 1968 the family moved again - this time to the High Wycombe area, where Eileen started senior school at High Wycombe School for Girls but she was not inspired by school and gained a reputation as the class comic and chief mischief maker, ably assisted by Helen Kingsbury.

In 1971 as 15 year old schoolgirl she met future husband Chris and a year later she left school with minimal 'O' Levels and attended Secretarial College.

In February 1974 at tender age of 18 she married Chris and started work as Secretary in a Solicitors' office in High Wycombe.

Around this time she also met and made lifelong friends with Linda and Lesley. Various secretarial jobs followed until at the beginning of the 1980s Eileen made what proved to be a life changing decision to join Avco as 24 year old PA to the Finance Director and during her 19 year career there she replaced her boss in that position

She was initially motivated by her then boss, Jamie, to qualify as an accountant, and in her first exams was one of the top ten candidates in the country

At this time too she also acquired some more long time friends such as Dawn, and Diana. (apologies if there were others I have not mentioned).

In January 1989 her first son Joseph Daniel McMillan arrived followed in January 1991 by Lewis George McMillan and Eileen became a doting mother.

In 1998 she was divorced from Chris yet in a way acquired more "children" in the form of a succession of Au-Pairs who are taken under Eileen's wing. Notably Brazilian Raquel, Turkish Esra and Croatian Dejan who remain in contact to this day.

At this time she becomes involved with school life as Governor and met a new friend Katherine Miller.

In 1999 she left Avco and joined the credit card start-up called NextCard. This was an exciting period but NextCard was wound up in 2001 although she still kept in touch with NextCarders.

She now joined GMAC for the first time gaining international reputation as highly competent member of staff.

Two years later she was Headhunted by Lloyds into a senior rôle in London. She loved the job but hated commuting into London every day. I think there are a number of friends from Lloyds present today.

In 2004 she achieved a life long ambition by going on Safari in Africa with her sons Joseph and Lewis.

In 2005 she was head-hunted back to GMAC's Bracknell operation as the only female board member. There may be one or two from GMAC present.

In summer 2008 she put severe headaches down to stresses of her high pressure financial role but a few months later she was admitted to Hospital and in December 2008 she was diagnosed with and an aggressive brain tumour and at 9pm on Christmas Eve 2008 she underwent emergency brain surgery

She was discharged on Boxing day however and the family spent a brilliant day together in Twyford. A testament to the amazing courage which was to carry Eileen through the next two years. She refused to accept defeat and fought every inch of the way and as a result lived longer and more fruitfully than most with this diagnosis.

Her major concern during this period was other people, especially her sons, brothers and their respective families. She didn't want to be a burden or have people worrying about her. Accordingly she preferred to keep news of her illness to her most immediate circle of family and friends

In March 2009 Joseph abandoned his University course to be able to spend time with his mother - very much against Eileen's wishes but everyone except Eileen thought Joseph made the right choice.

On her last holiday to Norway she failed in her attempt to catch the northern lights. and quite possibly this is the only significant thing she ever set her mind on and didn't ultimately achieve.

At the end of 2009 Jim, Steve, Eileen and respective families spent a very pleasant Christmas in a cottage in the new forest, it seemed like old times although all were conscious that Christmas might never be quite the same again.

Eileen passed away on October the 24th with her sons at her side and with the love and support of family and many of the friends here today.