



MEDIA RELEASE

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CELEBRATION OF LIFE LIVED IN SERVICE & ONE UNFINISHED DREAM:

HELEN OXENHAM, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PIONEER LAID TO REST

“My mother was always willing to push past barriers and obstacles to achieve what she felt was important” said Heather Oxenham “She maintained this passion and fire until her last breath.”

Helen Oxenham was a leader ahead of her time. In the early 1970s she recognised the importance of combating domestic violence and creating safe spaces for women and children. Along with five others she set up:

- South Australia’s first domestic violence shelter;
- Women’s Community Health Centre;
- Childcare Centre and
- Second-hand clothes shop.

On 23 July 2024, Helen passed away, leaving behind a significant legacy as a trailblazer in the fight against domestic and family violence. A service and celebration of her life will be held on Friday 02 August 2024, 2:30 pm at the South Adelaide Football Club. All are welcome to attend and join the celebration of an extraordinary woman. Several local government councils including Burnside Council, Onkaparinga Council, Coorong District and Murray Bridge Council will be flying their flags at half mast on the day of Helen’s funeral.

Upon her passing, Helen left one important task unfinished. She wanted to create The Place of Courage. The Place of Courage will be a ground-breaking and inclusive public artwork in Tulya Wardli/Bonython Park that seeks to publicly acknowledge the



devastating effects of domestic and family violence within our communities. The creation of this central place is Helen's last wish.

"I see many monuments and memorials throughout our cities and communities" Helen said, "but there is none to recognise victims, survivors and families of those impacted by domestic violence."

Her family is seeking donations to fulfill this dream.

Helen is very much missed but she is not only here in spirit but in the legacy of her extraordinary leadership, her inspiration and her relentless, outstanding determination to make the world a safer place for women and children.

Contact Information

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About Spirit of Woman ("SOW")

SOW is an unfunded not-for-profit organisation run by volunteers that seeks to commission The Place of Courage at Tulya Wardli/Bonython Park, alongside 'Ripple' artworks and community spaces throughout South Australia that pay tribute to those who have suffered from domestic and family violence. We aim to create and support public art spaces that allow for reflection, healing, public awareness and education.

Please watch survivors share their stories and the importance of this project, [here](#).

About The Place of Courage

In the last few years Helen established Spirit of Woman (SOW). SOW wishes to establish a commemorative public art space for victims and survivors of domestic/family violence. She was looking forward to the creation of The Place of Courage. The Place of Courage is a ground-breaking and inclusive public artwork in Tulya Wardli/Bonython Park that seeks to publicly acknowledge the devastating effects of domestic and family violence within our communities. It is a space dedicated to remembrance, healing, education, prevention, and community empowerment.

The project will create Australia's first ever contemporary, commemorative public artwork that raises awareness of the impact of family and domestic violence. As the first of its kind, the Place of Courage will reflect Adelaide's leading role in the arts and its recognised status as a UNESCO Creative City. It will also provide key leadership to councils across Australia. Local council areas such as Charles Sturt, Murray Bridge, Port Adelaide and City of Onkaparinga have already implemented 'Ripple' memorials that amplify the impact of the Place of Courage.



Spirit of Woman ("SOW") is seeking support from the Adelaide City Council to commence phase 1. This phase consists of the central two figures of a woman and her dog including language, informal seating, native plantings, and an explanatory plaque. The lead artist is Clancy Warner.

Donations can be made through the Spirit of Woman website.