

Diabetes
SA Support
Always



**Kellion Victory Medal
Awards 2023**

SA

**We're here to listen,
here to advise,
here to help lighten
the load of living
with diabetes.**

Support always... 70 years and beyond

Back in 1952 the co-discoverer of insulin, Dr Charles Best, travelled to South Australia to give a series of lectures.

During an impassioned speech, he suggested that a diabetic association be established here in our state.

The very next year our organisation opened its doors.

We've now celebrated over 70 years at the frontline of diabetes support in South Australia.

We're here to help people living with diabetes.

To empower people with information, education and understanding.

To ensure they have access to products and services that help them manage their diabetes.

To raise awareness of the risk of diabetes in our community and facilitate early detection and prevention programs.

To fund new research to discover new treatments for the many South Australians living with or at risk of diabetes today.

Most of all, we're here to give people personalised, individual support whenever they need it.

Kellion Victory Medal Recipients **2023**

The Kellion Victory Medal was named after Claude Kellion when diabetes claimed the life of his son John Claude. A successful business man, Claude established the Kellion Diabetes Foundation in John's memory. In view of his outstanding contribution towards diabetes in Australia, Mr Claude Kellion AM was invited to have his name associated with the Kellion Victory Medal Scheme.



The Kellion Victory Medal Scheme was established to recognise those living with type 1 or type 2 diabetes for 50 years or more. Award medals and certificates are presented to all recipients. The 50-year medal is silver, the 60-year medal is gold, 70-year medal is platinum, 75-year medal is diamond with 80 or 85-year awards discussed with the recipient.

A further addition to the Kellion Victory Medals Scheme is the Kellion Carer's Award, diabetes affects the whole family. The carer plays a major role in assisting a person with diabetes to live a full and satisfying lifestyle; the Kellion Carer's Award recognises many years of love, dedication and support.

Read the full stories of our South Australian Kellion Victory Medal recipients in this booklet, or visit diabetessa.com.au.



70 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Meredith Charles

My name is Meredith, and I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes on 18 March 1953. aged eight years and 5 months.

I remember a hospital visit in 1954 very well and can remember being woken by the Adelaide earthquake and, my bed on wheels, sliding across the floor of the Princess Ward of the Children's Hospital.

I was one of the participants of The Diabetic Association's first children's camp and can remember having my photo taken for the purpose of advertising the camp. The photo was also used on The Diabetic Association's letterhead. I have treasured this photo.

Despite having diabetes, I was able to nurse for several years, live and work interstate as well as travel interstate with my husband and two children.

I give special thanks to my precious mother for all her effort in the early years, and to Dr John Covernton. I also want to add a very special thanks to Dr Wilton Braund who has been my endocrinologist for the last 35 years, half of my life living with diabetes.

70 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Ian Grundy

The recipient has respectfully chosen not to share their story or picture.



60 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Suzanne Myers

My name is Suzanne Myers and I have been living with diabetes type 1 since the age of three and I am now 61.

Until the age of 19, I did not have the instruments of today to check my blood sugar levels so pretty much lived on the edge, I guess.

These days I am so fortunate to have the Libre Sensor to assist me with much better control and the great information I can obtain through the Diabetes Educators at Mt Gambier Country care.

I am still healthy at this stage with no issues associated with diabetes thankfully.

I live a less active life now but in my younger years I did many things, especially my hobby of horse interests which I loved so much.



60 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Sylvia Dulcie Freeman

I was born in 1934 and married Allan in 1952.

I had my two children, Christopher, and Karen, before being diagnosed with type one diabetes in 1962 and had to spend a week in the in the R.A.H. being stabilised.

I have always lived a good life with only a couple of hiccups until November 2012 when I had a stroke and now have to use a walker. I do need assistance around the house and use a wheelchair at other times but this has not dulled my outlook on life, my spirit is good!



60 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Wendy Ann Schemmell

I developed diabetes at five years of age. I remember my mother sterilising my metal and glass syringe/needles each day. At age eight, I attended my first diabetes camp. It was great fun doing sport and craft activities, and importantly, as I learnt to inject myself and I realised I was not the only one with diabetes. Around age 11 my body started changing, causing me to be hospitalised six times to be re-stabilised.

At home, I was treated the same as my three siblings, and sport was encouraged. I started gymnastics at age six. I commenced training as a gymnastics coach when I was 12, stopping in 2012 when I moved to the Riverland. I started playing volleyball in my middle teens, playing for almost 20 years. For 33 years, I was the Children's Librarian at the Payneham Library, a job I loved due to working with the children and books.

In 1987, I became pregnant and despite some medical issues my son was delivered five weeks early in perfect health. Following this, I had a bleed behind my right eye resulting in a lens implant operation, I was 29 years old. In my late forties, my left eye was also operated on.

Diabetes has been just part of my life and I have never felt limited. I found ways to do the things I wanted to do while managing my diabetes. However, in 2018 I developed rheumatoid arthritis. The medication required to control the arthritis impeded my diabetes control and has limited the use of my hands, so my husband is now my carer. I am on a new diabetes routine which is helping.

Since 2021, I have had two serious chest infections which greatly affected my asthma and diabetes control, with the last one causing mild pneumonia. My husband has been my strength and support throughout all my ups and downs over the last 20 years but especially the last two years. With his support and that of my doctors I look to the future with positivity.



60 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Susanne Holtham

I was three years old when diagnosed with type 1 diabetes and I was staying with Nanna at Victor Harbor.

I was very sick, and Nanna had to arrange to get me to the doctors. I was taken by bus to Old Noarlunga. The bus was met by Dr Tassie when we got there but I was already unconscious and immediately taken to the Adelaide Children's Hospital.

I was in hospital for a long time. One day I went missing, and the staff could not find me. I was cuddling my doll hiding in the bedside cupboard, turning blue as it was hard to breath in there. I did not want the nurse to inject me. Mum came in every day to learn to give me injections.

I can remember seeing the psychologist at the hospital and he asked me questions about ink spots.

My poor brothers witnessed me having hypoglycaemic events over the years. They were very supportive even up to today.

My poor mother needs a medal for looking after me. I was a difficult child and very hard to feed, only eating the meat and never the vegetables. Mum used to make me vanilla squares.

The pens today are much better than the glass syringes I started on. I have used every insulin available over the years including animal, and analogue. Not even a bleed on the brain in 2011 has stopped me. I am a fighter – 58 years old living with type 1 diabetes and still here!

60 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Wendy Kay Smith

Having been diagnosed when I was very young and admitted to Austin Hospital Heidelberg two days before my second birthday, I do not really remember much of what went on or how I felt about it. Not surprisingly there were a lot of tears shed!

As a child, I spent many happy summers going to camp for ten days which the Victorian Diabetes Association ran doing fun things like going to the beach, a joy flight over Phillip Island, and a fancy-dress party held on the last night. Very fond memories!

I worked in the medical field as an adult, which I really enjoyed. I played competition tennis and squash, eventually got married and had a child then moved to the far reaches of outback Northern Territory. I stayed there for 20 years and have recently settled here in Adelaide.

Over time, there have been numerous advances in diabetes care, including using the Abbott Freestyle Libre CGM which is a very welcome necessity in my life.



60 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Julie Dianne Angus

I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in 1963 at the age of 10 years, after experiencing symptoms of excessive thirst and loss of weight. I was immediately admitted to the Adelaide Children's Hospital, where I spent two weeks being stabilised on insulin injections.

Before I was discharged, my parents were educated on giving me daily injections, which involved sterilising glass syringes and needles every night before bed. I was no longer allowed sugar in my diet unless I had symptoms of a hypo, but otherwise I ate a balanced and nutritious diet. Home-cooked meals were mostly plain and simple in those days, and they needed to be eaten on time to avoid hypos. I was educated to count "carbs" in my early teens, which helped to establish a healthy diet at a very early age. My "healthy" diet and disciplined routine has continued throughout the last 60 years.

Improvements in diabetes treatment and management have been slow over the years, which was disappointing and at times frustrating, particularly when I was growing up. After more than 10 years of boiling up glass syringes and needles, disposable syringes were introduced in the mid 1970's, followed by insulin pens, which helped enable me to live a more flexible lifestyle. Testing urine samples for many years was only a guide as to whether my sugar levels were high or low, and certainly did not provide an accurate measurement as can be achieved today. Blood Glucose Monitors weren't available until the late 1970's, the first of which was not exactly small, and didn't fit into a lady's handbag!

In the last few years, I have been able to monitor my BSL more easily using a Blood Glucose Sensor, and last year I was introduced to an insulin pump for the first time, which has been an enormous advance in the management of my diabetes after many years of injections.

Despite all the difficulties and challenges of living with diabetes for over 60 years, I have thankfully been able to lead a relatively normal life. I have had wonderful support from my family over the years, which has helped me get through some of the challenges which people with diabetes face daily. I have also had help and support from Dr Robin Burston, who for 25 years was my physician and endocrinologist (now deceased), Dr Stephen Stranks (current endocrinologist) who has 'modernised' my treatment with the latest technology, and Effie Koasati (Diabetes Educator).

I have been able to enjoy travelling with my husband and family to many parts of Australia and around the world, but the greatest achievement I can think of is survival against the odds for over 60 years! Hopefully I can continue to stay healthy and active, particularly with the improvements now being made in diabetes management, with the hope of a cure not far away.



60 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Beverly Eva Furness

My diagnosis came on my sister's birthday in 1962 and I was 11 years old. I was admitted to the Adelaide Children's Hospital which is now the Women's and Children's Hospital.

Our family doctor, Dr Reed, at Elizabeth Grove advised my mother after I had done a test that I had diabetes and that I needed to be hospitalised so they could teach my mother and I how to inject myself. As a young person not fully understanding what was going on, I was terrified my mother would leave me there! As I was only 11 at the time, my mother controlled my insulin, diet, and everything about my life.

When I used to have to test with the finger pricks, I always had calluses, but I now use the Freestyle Libre 2. The sensors and alarm let me know when my blood sugar is low which helps to prevent hypos.

My husband Derek is my most important person as he is the one who has helped me monitor my diabetes for the last 50 years. He often calls me stubborn because I never give up on anything or anybody and try hard not to rely on anyone.

I think my greatest achievement are my two daughters because when I was first diagnosed, I was advised that my life expectancy was 21 years old. I have surpassed that as I am now 71 years old!

In 1977, a medical paper was written by Dr Hughes about my pregnancies, and another about my arthritis. Despite losing a leg and continuing to live with severe arthritis, I just keep on going and now love caring for my grandson.

The Kellion Medal represents an achievement because I proved all the medical professionals wrong.



50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Everhardus (Harry) Temminck

My name is Everhardus Temminck but you can call me Harry.

In 1973, my life changed forever. My wife noticed that I had too many trips to the toilet and being a nurse, she feared that it was diabetes.

Within a day I landed in hospital to see what was going on. The result I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. At that time, I could only use the steel injection needles and blood samples that were tested at a Medical Centre and we just had to learn to live with it. Within a year I got the plastic needles so no more messing around with sterilisation. Of course, going on a diet was another challenge because I hated using the scales.

Life went on and I was a police officer on the waters around Rotterdam. I was always afraid that I could lose my job or end up sitting in an office. Luckily, it went well and kept my job until we migrated to Australia with our children. With a bit of help from one of the people at the Australian embassy, we got the go ahead and arrived in Adelaide in 1982. I had various jobs, including store manager and helping the farmers. We then bought a roadhouse in the country, and finally we owned a business that sold exclusive disability equipment. In March 2008 we sold that business, started our retirement, and got used to another lifestyle.

I was a patient of Dr Patt Phillip's, and my eye specialist was Dr Wong for almost 30 years and then Dr Handley. Dr Wilton Braund has been my Endocrinologist for 20 years. I will miss him when he retires.

I learned a lot from Dr Braund, and he finally got me to start the pump. The pump was not always working the way it should, but Dr. Braund was always very happy with results and was amazed how I went through all those years.

Overall, my wife and I have a great life and learned to live with the ups and downs of living with diabetes.



50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Pamela Jean Barnett

I was diagnosed at 20, only just arrived from London and looking for work. I remember becoming very thirsty and was drinking from the bathroom taps and I knew it was diabetes due to family history.

In the early years I managed with a lot of luck using glass syringes and guessing my insulin dose based on urine.

The technology that really helped me has definitely been the insulin pump.

My greatest support people were always my ex-husband and my two sons.

The best achievements in my life are my boys and managing my diabetes.

To me, the Kellion Medal means pride and my sons always tell me that I am amazingly strong and positive despite negative things happening in life.



50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Stephen Hodgson

I was diagnosed by my GP and ended up in Queen Elizabeth Hospital for a week to learn how to manage my condition, which was difficult because my wife was pregnant with our second child at the time.

In the early years, I used to manage my diabetes by counting portions of carbohydrates and using urine sticks to check glucose levels. It really was quite stressful.

The technological advancements like the Flash Libre reader have really helped me with my diabetes management and it is really reassuring to have alarms.

Over the years, my wife, Christine, has been the biggest help in helping me manage my diabetes.

In terms of achievements, I am most proud that when I left Air Force in 1973, I went back to complete school at the age of 23 and that I continue to manage well living with diabetes.

The Kellion Medal is recognition of the hard work done to manage type 1 diabetes.



50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Andrew Young

I was diagnosed soon after my second daughter's birth in 1972 and my records were held by Russell Clinic, which has been regularly consulted since 1967.

In the early days I managed my diabetes with regular injections, careful diet, and exercise.

I have definitely noticed changes to things like insulin types, enhanced knowledge, development and use of insulin pumps, and CGM technology.

People who have helped me through my diabetes journey include my GPs, endocrinologists, diabetes educators, dieticians, June Young (wife), family, friends, and myself! The medical support was helped by regular visits, monitoring, and advice and June with her ongoing overview of diet and lifestyle choices.

My greatest achievement is that I have continued to live a full and healthy life in all regards, for which I am most grateful.

To me the Kellion Medal is recognition of the outstanding assistance provided by a number of medical and healthcare professionals, and my family over the past 50 years.



50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Graham Keith Jamieson

I was 21 when first diagnosed and was working as a storeman at Farmers Union and into playing sport. It really did not make a huge impact at that stage because I wasn't prescribed any insulin. It was only when I became seriously ill and lost weight, then had to start insulin, that I accepted that it was going to be my life from then on. But what was most upsetting was that some friends started to distance themselves because they thought they could catch it.

I had a few problems early on after starting insulin but eventually got my diabetes under control as best I could. I made sure I started eating correctly and continuously testing myself in the old-fashioned way which is nothing like I have today. It is so simple now with the sensor.

The changes to technologies can really be seen from the injections - they were nothing like today's pens, which makes life so much easier. Then the testing kit that used to be for finger pricking which caused hardness on the tips of my fingers and soreness, is now the new sensors and my life has changed for the better (Libre 2).

In terms of important people who have helped me manage my diabetes, the doctors throughout my life have made a huge impact as I have been able to keep up with up-to-date insulins and technologies. Also, the diabetes nurses who keep me up to date with dietary info and different tools available to me, but it really has been my mother and wife who have kept me on the straight and narrow.

In terms of achievements in my life, I think the fact I was able to keep working and support my family, just as a person without the condition could, is important to me.

It is an absolute honour to receive this award and be acknowledged for being a person who has been living long term with type 1 diabetes.



50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Leanne Patrica Finlay nee Hearnden

I was born at Angaston & Districts Hospital in 1969 and my parents said I was a very healthy and happy baby. It was not until I was nine months old that they noticed a change where I started to drink excessive amounts of water and appeared to be losing energy when she was still at a crawling stage.

My parents took me to Angaston & Districts Hospital and Dr Drever decided to keep me in overnight, but my condition worsened, and I was taken to the Adelaide Children's Hospital by ambulance.

When my parents saw me, I was unconscious and on drips with various monitors attached and the doctors said I was showing all the signs and symptoms of diabetic, but they were not confident because I was so young. Over the next few days, I was diagnosed and at 10 months, I was the youngest child diagnosed with diabetes at the Adelaide Children's Hospital.

My parents did not initially understand what this meant but then they learned about insulin, infections, blood and urine testing, the importance of eating the right food, having the right fluids, and adhering to a proper time schedule. They did a great job in my childhood.

I am now 57 years old, my husband and I have been married for 31 years and we have two beautiful daughters, Tatum, 26-year-old, who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at 11 years old, to my devastation. My parents were told there would be a cure by the time I was 11, but we are still waiting!

Blood testing machines were the absolute game changer! I remember my first machine was the size of a brick, my parents paid around \$3000 for it, no help from any state or federal government or anyone else. Disposable insulin pens are great too, and while I'm not a pump convert yet I love the ease of my Libre sensor.

My specialists over 57 years, Dr Hugh Douglas, Dr RA Burston, Dr Mitra Guha and now Dr Anthony Zimmerman who have been a priority in helping my parents and myself. Mum and Dad did the really hard work though wringing nappies out for urine tests, boiling glass syringes and steel needles to sterilise, managing diet food etc. i.e., NO SUGAR in my early days, and low carbs with lots of hypos while living in many SA country areas with few resources and little help. My husband, my daughters, family, friends, and work colleagues have all contributed to my care.

I am most proud of my excellent diabetes management prior, during and after my pregnancies. Eternally grateful I got to be pregnant and thank Dr Mitra Guha, Dr Linda McKendrick, Drs C & P Munt in assisting Simon & I in the safe delivery of Tatum 26 and Shelby 22, who are our pride & joy.

Being a Kellion Medal recipient has made me feel a little emotional and it is amazing to have this feat acknowledged, because it certainly has not been easy.



50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Christina Short

I was admitted to the Royal Women's Hospital in Melbourne in 1972 for a procedure and my pre surgery urine test showed high blood sugar levels. While still in hospital, I had a glucose tolerance test and that's when my diagnosis and treatment started under the direction of Dr. Gordon Ennis (Endocrinologist). I had just returned from a trip to the UK.

At the time I was diagnosed, I had been unwell for the previous five months experiencing weight loss, extreme thirst, feeling very fatigued, eczema and severe cramps. I realised there was something very wrong, but I had no definite medical diagnosis apart from my treatment for my eczema.

So, when I was given the diagnosis of type 1 diabetes it was almost a relief as I realised that it was treatable. It was however a shock to my husband who nevertheless has been my constant support over the years, and we have adapted to all the changes.

At the time of diagnosis, we had two children, a son aged 5 and a daughter aged 2 and they have also been very supportive over the years.

When I was first diagnosed, there was only one insulin injection daily before breakfast which made control a bit hit and miss with a strict routine as far as meal times. BGL's were only by urine testing which also didn't give a totally accurate result and the glass syringes had to be sterilised regularly.

The advances in insulin medication and especially with the introduction of fast acting insulin and being able to adjust doses at mealtimes depending on BGL's. Blood testing rather than urine with the added testing is far more accurate giving results in real time. Over the last few years, the introduction of Libre 1 and Libre 2 Freestyle sensors has made blood testing so much easier. Also, the detailed labelling of packaged food items has been helpful as far as carbohydrate intake.

Thinking back over the last 50 years, the one person who has helped me the most would be my husband. He has been a strong support especially in times of difficulty such as hypos. My experience of living with type 1 diabetes would have been lonely and difficult without his love and encouragement. Also, I am thankful for the three endocrinologists Dr G Ennis in Melbourne for nine years, Dr P Harding and Dr A Zimmerman in Adelaide. Without their care, support and guidance, life would have been a different story.

Being able to live a full life is one of my greatest achievements. I've raised a family and being able to participate in all their activities and travelled around Australia and overseas. I've worked and volunteered and done whatever needs to be done without diabetes preventing me.

The Kellion Medal represents living a full and active life for 50 years. Living with a challenge makes you strive harder and be aware of your blessings. I think it makes you more sensitive to the needs of others. When I was first diagnosed, I was uncertain how it would affect my lifespan, hoping I would live to 40 but the reality is I have had 56 years with my wonderful husband, two supportive children, seven grandsons, one great grandson.



50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Wendy Joan McKechnie

I was adopted and my parents took me to the hospital with scarlet fever as I was continuously unwell at age of six.

I have always had an intellectual disability, so I am unsure of sure of the details of my diagnosis in the early stages.

My husband Glen is my main carer, and my family are wonderful too. The Libre Sensor is a great help to me.

My greatest achievements are my three children now aged 31, 30 and 27 years, but my husband says I show great resilience and I am a fighter!

50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Neil Andrew Burton

The recipient has respectfully chosen not to share their story.

50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Barbara Elizabeth McLoughlin

The recipient has respectfully chosen not to share their story.

Congratulations to all the Kellion Medalists!
Your stories are an inspiration to all.

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It's South Australian
for Support Always.

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