Gone but never forgotten

Centralian Advocate journalist Corry Sinclair compiled a list of some of the obituaries featured throughout 2012.

**Leslie Oldfield**

April 10, 1941 - April 17, 2012

Alice Springs’s first female mayor, Leslie Oldfield (Huggins) had her far share of challenges and triumphs in the nine years she spent in the role.

After being deposed as deputy mayor in 1981, Leslie was elected as mayor with five votes the only other candidate at a by-election in April 1983, and served as mayor until July 1984.

Leslie had the honour of meeting Prince Charles and Princess Diana — not to mention writing a weekly Mayoral column in this newspaper.

**Brenton Leonard Hissey**

September 29, 1958 - April 29, 2012

Brenton Hissey was an Eyre Peninsula wheat and sheep pastoralist before joining a respected legal firm and always played an active part in his community whenever he found himself.

His love was volunteer for St John Ambulance, a keen member of Yanta Polo Club, and studied to attain his commercial pilot’s licence.

After being employed by Whyla Airlines, his nickname became “Woodrow”. In 1986, he joined the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) beginning flying operations from the Alice Springs Base.

**Pamela Loftts**

August 8, 1949 - July 4, 2012

An established and well-respected artist, but first and foremost, a beautiful and caring human being. Pamela played an integral part in the establishment of Watch This Space in 1993, provided beautiful illustration work on Mem Fox’s books like The Boat, Go Fish!, The Rainbow Snake.

Pamela’s lasting impact will be remembered and celebrated by the annual Lofty Awards.

**Russell “Bear” Ward**

July 17, 1942 - August 4, 2012

A big part of life in Alice Springs for more than 20 years, Bear was a rugby fanatic, a passionate carer, a jolly Sturt Centralian of the Year in 2003 and an enthusiastic town crier from 2009 to 2011.

Bear had a passion for rugby and was the president of both the Rugby League and Rugby Unions in Alice Springs from 1993 to 1997, and was also known for his work with people with special needs.

**Molly Clark**

December 22, 1952 - September 22, 2012

Remembered for her feistiness, for calling a spade a spade, for outright stubbornness and non-nonsense talk, Molly Clark was born before the under-17s football match.

**Billy Benn**

October 15, 2012

Born to an Aiyawan father and Akaree mother in the Alfene (Harts Range) area, Billy Benn worked as a miner, stockman and a tracker before his older sisters encouraged his interest in painting.

In 1981, he was moved to the Hetti Perkins nursing home and in 1983 was taken on by Blind, where his artistic skills were developed. His unique landscape paintings earned him a place among the top 50 Australian artists and in 2008 he won the Alice Prize and the Tobias Art Award.

**Greg Crowe**

November 1, 1940 - November 8, 2012

The tragic loss of a leader who dedicated his life to educating the Territory’s remote indigenous children gripped the community of Santa Teresa.

Greg Crowe was the principal at Luritja Avenue Catholic School in Santa Teresa, about 89km from Alice Springs.

The 72-year-old from the south coast of New South Wales had been a fixture in Central Australia for 20 years.

Herbert Laughton

February 7, 1927 - December 2, 2012

Born in the Todd River of Alice Springs, he was recognised nationally as the grandfather of country music in the Northern Territory, and leaves behind four generations of family and friends to mourn his passing.

The descendant of Arrernte and Eastern Arrente people, Herbert, as he was known to his friends and family, was always fiercely proud of his Aboriginal blood and ancestral Arrernte background.

He was active in educating mainstream Australia about the Stolen Generations and Aboriginal history. An outspokend activist for Aboriginal affairs and an active founding member of the Stolen Generations and Arrernte Council.

**Paton “Pat” Forster**

1921 - 2012

The Perthborn artist joined the Navy as a teenager and graduated as a signalman from Finders Naval Base in Melbourne before transferring to Darwin.

After his wife died in the early ‘90s, Mr Forster moved to Alice Springs. He was heavily involved in the Gallery Society of Victoria, and loved ballet and any form of theatre or classical music.

‘He could paint beautifully, he used to do woodwork at times and he could turn his hand to many crafts and write several books,” his friend Bev Ellis said.