



### Judith Ironside (nee Long)

Born in North Essex, England, Judith moved to Ireland over fifty years ago where she helped her late husband, James, build a very successful veterinary business in Co. Clare. While Judith was a quiet, private person she was not afraid to speak her mind or stand up for those in need when required and this sense of volunteerism permeated through local and national organisations all her life.

Having worked in political research, her ability to network enabled her to quickly become involved in local community. Her work on the *Board of Rural Resettlement West Clare* helped to achieve major social and infrastructural improvements in the rural areas of Quilty and Spanish Point.

She was a formidable lady who put the common good before everything else - a person who threw herself head-long into any project she became involved in. As a founding member of the *Caring for Carers* organisation in 1987, Judith was inspirational in identifying the need to support family carers who face the burden of caring for dependent family members at home. Through this work, the Ennis Soroptimist

Club was awarded '*The Laureate of Women of Europe Award*' by the Irish Council for the European Movement in recognition of the voluntary efforts at Irish and European level.

The Caring For Carers Organisation subsequently developed into Care Alliance Ireland that thrives to this day, with a presence in 23 counties. Judith remained actively involved in this work, and was delighted to see Carers interests represented at EU level in Brussels, through the formation of Eurocarers.org in 2004.

She also served on the *Board of Carrigoran Nursing Home* and was an active member of the local Church of Ireland and was a member of the committee responsible for the €22,000

restoration of the *Christ Church Spanish Point* spire. Later in her life, she also served on the *Board of Age Action Ireland*.

She enjoyed golf at *Lahinch Golf Club* over many years and her dedication and commitment was recognised when she was elected Lady Captain in 1992 and Lady President in 2009. Judith became a proud ambassador for the West Coast of Ireland but never forgot her English heritage, and was proud of her adopted community and especially proud of her accomplished family. As an avid gardener and dog lover, she also loved sea-swimming, and one of her proudest achievements was learning to safely catch lobsters by hand!

As a dedicated and active Soroptimist, Judith was *National Association President* (1989-1990) and a long-serving member of *Ennis & District Soroptimists* (Club President 1979-1980 and 1999-2000). Her most incredible gift of friendship and camaraderie inspired us and she will be remembered as one of our most valuable members. With her infectious laughter and ability to bring energy to any project, she epitomised what it means to be a volunteer and represented the very best qualities of a Soroptimist.

She passed away peacefully at her home, Atlantic Lodge, Spanish Point, Co. Clare on Monday 31st December, 2018 surrounded by her loving family.