



# South African National Society

## History - Culture and Conservation.

Founded in 1905 for the preservation of objects of Historical Interest and Natural Beauty  
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## NAUREEN CRAIG

**09/12/1930 – 02/01/2021**

Naureen Craig was born on the 9<sup>th</sup> December, 1930, in Johannesburg. At the age of four she had polio which affected her right arm. Despite being naturally right-handed, she had to learn to become left-handed. Her parents decided to send her to boarding school for her high school education. Naureen elected to go to the Convent at Kroonstad as she was determined to travel to school by train. Despite her disability, Naureen became a swimmer and a tennis player. Her ability to swim, on one occasion, allowed Naureen to save a child who was drowning. Naureen trained as a teacher after leaving school.

Naureen decided to travel and see the world. She only got as far as Rhodesia when she met her first husband and got married. She had two children, a son and a daughter. Naureen taught in both Salisbury and Bulawayo, including schools that catered for pupils who were visually and hearing impaired, both in Rhodesia and South West Africa. Naureen also got involved in the Girl Guides Movement.

Naureen's son was killed while fighting in the war in Rhodesia. Her first marriage to Zietsman was not happy and they divorced. On the death of her father she moved to Durban in mid-1991 to be close to her mother. Naureen wanted to learn more about Natal. She saw an advertisement in the Natal Mercury about the South African National Society (SANS), who met at the Local History Museum in Aliwal Street, with an accompanying telephone number. Naureen joined SANS and made many new acquaintances, including the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, Dennis Slaney, Pat Charlton and the late Canon Fuggle. Naureen particularly remembered the couple of outings she went on with the Society arranged by the late Gilbert Russell. She came to learn a great deal about Natal (at ground level) through being involved in Peacekeeping with Diakonia and later voter education.

Naureen was elected to the SANS Committee but resigned when she moved to a newly developing Retirement Complex and didn't want to travel all the way into town. Her daughter, Sheila, who lived in Ireland and was a teacher and Anglican priest, came out to South Africa, to assist her mother, as Naureen had undergone an operation on her left hand, which as Naureen puts it, left her temporarily handless. It was during this visit that Naureen and her daughter decided that she needed to move into a retirement complex. It was here that Naureen met her second husband, Bill Craig. They got married and decided to move back into town. This

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second marriage (it was the second marriage for the both of them) proved to be a very happy one. Naureen described her husband, Bill, as a very good man. They acquired a flat in Courtleigh Heights on the Durban Snell Parade where Naureen could see the sea that gave her so much pleasure.

It was about this time that Naureen met the late Professor Leslie McCracken (father of Professor Donal McCracken). Leslie McCracken had recently returned from a visit to his family in Ireland. He telephoned Naureen to tell her that her daughter, Sheila, was teaching his children in Wicklow Town. Naureen and Bill became friends with Professor McCracken, Snr, and Naureen would take Professor McCracken to SANS meetings (Bill wasn't interested). It was Leslie McCracken's enthusiasm for SANS that inspired Naureen to stand again for the Committee. In due course Naureen was elected Chairman of SANS. The Society was going through a rough patch with membership at an all-time low. Professor McCracken asked Naureen to try and save the Society. Naureen played a major role in building up membership, not least because of her popular and informative Newsletters. Naureen said it had been a great honour to serve SANS as a Committee Member, Chairman and President and eventually as one of SANS Honorary Vice-Presidents as it was a Society that has achieved much since its inception in 1905. The members of SANS thank Naureen for her years of devoted service to the Society. Naureen continued attending SANS meetings until November 2019.

On Naureen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday, on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020, Robert King (President of SANS), Myra Boyes (Treasurer of SANS) and Johan van der Berg (Committee member), visited Naureen at Nazareth House with cake, flowers, a card and a framed certificate that made Naureen an Honorary Life Member of SANS.

Naureen was a person who took her religious faith and social responsibilities very seriously. She attended church every Sunday, while her health permitted, and chose a spiritual counsellor from among the clergy at St Thomas's Church, the Reverend Jane Manser. Even in her eighties, Naureen felt she had not given enough back to the world and asked Jane Manser what else she could contribute.

For many years Naureen gave time every week as a checker of errors in tapes read by the Readers at Tape Aids for the Blind. Naureen was also an active member of the Shakespeare Society and continued to attend their meetings until late 2019. She was also a member of the University of KwaZulu Natal Alumni Society. Naureen loved attending the interesting alumni talks and, despite increasing frailty, did so until the beginning of 2020.

At an Easter Service at St James's Church, Morningside, Naureen was accidentally knocked down by a car leaving the church. Although she did not sustain any apparent serious injuries, her health was never the same again.

At the end of 2018 Naureen was persuaded, with considerable reluctance, to give up her flat and car and move into Essenwood Retirement Home on the Berea. Naureen was not happy with the move and described it like

being back at boarding school due to all the rules and regulations. Due to Naureen's increasing frailty, her doctor and good friend, Dr. Richard Steele, arranged for Naureen to be moved into frail care at Nazareth House at the end of 2019. Naureen, who had fought cancer twice before, was operated on again for cancer in 2019. Unfortunately the cancer recurred again in the last year of her life. The coronavirus meant the closing of Nazareth House to visitors. Naureen loved receiving visitors as they gave her a link with the world outside. It was only possible for her to receive visitors again at the end of 2020. Unfortunately by this point she had become withdrawn, bed ridden and she found it increasingly difficult to express herself. The cancer made it painful to speak at all.

As the Rev. Manser and Naureen's daughter, Sheila (who spoke via Zoom from England), said at Naureen's committal service, Naureen was an extremely strong character who was involved in virtually any areas she believed she could make a contribution to and she gave her all to anything she was involved with.

Her last couple of years, and particularly her last year, were very trying for her and she bore them with great stoicism. Naureen leaves behind a large number of friends who remember her with enormous affection and are grateful that Naureen is now at peace.

Robert King

President SANS