

# A voice for the man on the land

## LEON ALFRED MUDGE

### Grains industry leader

**Born:** April 2, 1943, Ceduna

**Died:** November 19, 2019,  
Nuriootpa

WHEN Leon Mudge came home to Nunjiekompita, on Eyre Peninsula, from three years at Scotch College, his father, shopkeeper Basil, gave him a choice: do you want to be a shopkeeper or a farmer?

Leon was emphatic in his reply. He wanted to be a farmer. The fourth child of Basil and Jean, Leon grew up at Nunjiekompita, on wide open farming country inland from Streaky Bay.

He lost his older sister and brother when he was three but otherwise had a happy childhood with sisters Betty and



Kathleen and brother Milton. Basil and Jean owned the general store and Leon attended the Nunjiekompita Primary School before going to Scotch.

When he returned home the family sold the general

store at "Nunji" and took on a farm at Maildaburra (Haslam), near the Streaky Bay coast. It was 1958.

Leon farmed with his father until 1968, when his parents retired to Streaky Bay, and sharefarmers Kath and Ian joined Leon living in the family home and treating him like one of the family.

Leon was in Adelaide for the Royal Show in 1968. At a dance at Norwood Town Hall he met Marilyn Drew. They married exactly a year later.

Leon decided to diversify and, in 1972, founded the Maildaburra Poll Hereford Stud, his hardy sires proving popular in Central Australia.

He loved displaying his cattle, winning ribbons at regional and Adelaide shows,

and spent two years as president of the SA Poll Hereford Society.

In the meantime, he had welcomed cropping trials on his property and the agronomists invited him to take up committee positions on the nearby Minnipa Research Centre as well as at Roseworthy Agricultural College.

For many years, Leon was a popular go-between for farmers across Eyre Peninsula and the all-important agricultural research groups.

He became a formidable advocate for funding for research to suit farms on the West Coast.

Leon and Marilyn had three daughters and a son and were part of the communities in the Nunji and Wirrulla areas.

When he was 53, Leon was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

He took it on board as he had done with the many issues that challenge farmers and continued to be active in research, as a farmer and grazier, and even as a tennis player and sportsman until the progress of the disease made such things impractical.

Eventually, he and Marilyn retired to the Barossa Valley.

He was very proud of his children's career and business achievements as well as their involvement on boards and committees, following in his footsteps.

He is survived by Marilyn, daughters Natalie, Carolyn and Jacqui, son Darren and their families.