



**Jodie Michelle Reid**  
**Memorial Scholarship**



***Written in loving remembrance by Jodie's parents Malcolm  
and Heather Reid and dedicated to Jodie's brother Robert***

**16 December 2006**

# Jodie's Story

**Jodie Michelle Reid** was born in Beaudesert on 29 January 1977. She passed away on 26 June 2004 after succumbing to the ravages of Diabetes Mellitus from which she suffered for 25 of her 27 years.

Jodie's life was inspirational and although our loss and grief has been great, we acknowledge that Jodie has entered Eternal Life and rests with her Creator. To have walked with Jodie through the trials of her life was a privilege and to have witnessed her care and concern for others and heard tributes of her compassion and holistic nursing of the sick was a humbling and enriching experience for our family. Her life was short due to chronic illnesses associated with Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus, however, her impact on all who knew her was enormous.

Jodie completed her Secondary School education at Aldridge State High School, Maryborough in 1993 and obtained an Overall Position 6. She then attended the Australian Catholic University McAuley Campus, which was previously located at Mitchelton, where she completed a Nursing Degree in 1996 and in doing so, won the Centaur Memorial Medal for achieving the highest Grade Point Average in her final year.

By the time Jodie had completed her Nursing Degree she had endured temporary blindness and required extensive argon laser treatment on both eyes due to Involuting Proliferative Retinopathy. In her early working life as a Registered Nurse at St Stephens Private Hospital in Maryborough she required further laser treatment for a retinal haemorrhage.

Her Specialist Dr. John Ambler wrote: "She was treated with many sessions of laser treatment in both eyes. This involved frequent visits to my office at which time she would suffer considerable pain from the laser. She bore this pain with amazing stoicism. One could not help one's heart going out to her during this ordeal."

Dr. Ambler also wrote, “Jodie was an inspiration both to me and my staff. We were constantly amazed by her cheerfulness and positive attitude in spite of the many hurdles that had come her way. She is one of a small number of patients that we will always remember.”

During her early working days further diabetic complications were experienced. These included growth problems and early stage gastroparesis (severe vomiting).

In December 1998 we had moved to a cattle property outside Roma and in late August 1999 Jodie obtained a position at the Roma Base Hospital in order to be closer to family support. Although gastroparesis was becoming a more constant event, Jodie continued her thirst for knowledge and studied by distance education through Deakin University. In 2001 she completed a Graduate Certificate in Diabetes Education and worked as the Roma District Diabetes Educator in addition to her nursing duties. She also completed a Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support examination in accordance with the standards of the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians for the status of Advanced Provider. This authorised her to stop and render medical assistance at any emergency scene.

Jodie was a keen supporter of ongoing life education and often spoke at symposiums and in-service training days.

She was chosen to present a paper at the 2004 National Diabetes Educators Scientific Conference in Sydney, but passed away without knowing of this achievement.

Jodie’s battle with gastroparesis, which saw her more and more as an in-patient than a nurse on the wards, was debilitating. She constantly suffered nausea, vomiting and constipation with unexpected incidences of watery diarrhoea, which presented a challenge of “holding on” during sessions in the operating theatre or in accident and emergency units.

During the period May 2002 to June 2004 Jodie suffered severe gastrointestinal complications, which led to the implantation of a gastric pacing device to try to improve her stomach function. After an accident on her way to work from our property, the gastric pacer, which had initially appeared to have made a large improvement, failed and finally in October 2002 Jodie had a Total Gastrectomy (removal of entire stomach). Throughout her ordeals she continued to work and be part of whichever community she lived in.

In March 2003, Jodie obtained a position at Wesley Hospital chiefly to be closer to her specialists. She had lost a lot of weight after the gastrectomy and a jejunostomy feeding stoma was inserted to try and provide additional nutrition. Continuing weight loss saw her drop from 40kg to 28 kg. In February 2004 a right internal jugular vein Hickman catheter was placed so that long-term home intravenous nutrition could commence. Being an RN Jodie did her homework and resourced information regarding the pumps and facilitated purchase of the necessary equipment. She also consulted with her Endocrinologist and received an insulin infusion pump to try and achieve tighter control of blood glucose levels.

Dr. Don Perry-Keene, Endocrinologist, wrote: "Jodie had almost achieved bionic status." Gastroenterologist, Dr. Andrew Pascoe commented: "Jodie was certainly inspirational to other staff and to myself because of her constant courage and desire to improve her health and her quality of life.

Through this severe illness she could maintain a job, good relationships with people and her dignity. She was challenging but I liked her as a patient. She frequently expressed her gratitude by sneaking very thoughtful gifts into my consulting rooms. Managing patients like Jodie teaches you not to give up, and teaches you to think laterally, and to continue to work with trust between you and your patient."

After a lengthy spell in Wesley Hospital from 29 January 2004 to 1 March 2004, Jodie was granted leave for 12 months from Wesley Hospital to try and regain fitness and came to live with us at "Rock Point", Croftby, which is a rural area outside Boonah. She worked occasionally as a relieving nurse at Boonah Hospital and participated in the Boonah community during her final months wearing her backpack 24 hours a day which contained her life supporting pump and essential intravenous nutrition. She smiled at all she saw in case they were friends or acquaintances as on occasions her peripheral vision was poor. She enjoyed a good cuppa and could often be found frequenting local coffee shops.

Due to enormous weight loss her immune system was poor and in early June 2004 she was diagnosed with Adult Respiratory Distress Syndrome. Jodie was placed on life support at Wesley's Intensive Care Unit. After 23 days in the Unit she passed away on 26 June 2004 at the age of 27.

Though not baptised a Catholic Jodie had a great friendship with the Rev. Harry Bliss, now a retired Catholic Priest living at Scarborough, who anointed her prior to her passing. In his Foreword to a book we hope to publish Rev. Harry has written in part: "Those weeks, months and days leading to her death are a most sacred memory. Her burial and funeral service at Boonah opened up for me many facets of Jodie's life that had escaped me or had been forgotten in the mists.

While we celebrated her entry into Eternal Life and thanked God for the gift of this most lovable young person, there was a feeling of her presence in our lives that would forever be treasure. No other young person of my acquaintance strikes such gracious memories. My recollection of her is one of cheery love and heroic venture that looks to the future and an eternity of sweet recapture."

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