

## Howard Baker



Howard grew up in Suffolk, England, where he met and married his beautiful childhood sweetheart Fay.

His first introduction to bridge was at uni, where he was supposedly studying Mathematics at King's College, London. However, Howard didn't start to play regularly until after he retired, having to give his exams at least a morsel of his attention. Certainly, it's a game that suits his keen, analytical brain and we, at the club, delight in hearing his infectious laugh across the room.

In their mid 20's, Howard and Fay left an England ravaged by the IRA and headed for the colonies. Howard had forged a successful, albeit a very stressful and demanding career as a Chief Financial Officer, which enabled the young couple to travel widely. They revelled in the expat life, enjoying lengthy spells in Zambia, Hong Kong and New Zealand, before finally arriving in Australia in 1978.

Howard ended up as Head of a Government Department in Queensland. They had always been very fond of the Sunshine Coast, so when their daughter Jen moved up here, the decision to retire on the coast was a no brainer.

Both Howard and Fay have a passion for music. Over the years, Howard has played some 5 different musical instruments and been a member of various choirs for over 30 years, including *Oriana*, a Buderim based, award winning tour de force, which has been on 3 European tours, performing in many iconic venues, including St Paul's Cathedral in London, St Peter's Basilica in Rome and St Mark's in Venice. Although Howard and Fay have always adored Paris (who wouldn't?), they came to cherish Rome after the choir's Italian tour, where they have many, many happy memories.

Fay, an accomplished pianist and cellist herself, is the Artistic Director of *Oriana*. In 2020, she was honoured with an OAM for her dedicated service to this glorious choir and to choral music in general.

Indeed, another lauded string in her bow is establishing the *Ten Tenors* in 1995, who, as dishy university students, used to practise in Howard and Fay's loungeroom at The Gap. Since then, they have reached superstardom, with their heavenly 10-part

harmonies and Los Vegas pizzazz, including knocking Barry Manilow off his pedestal, by being the highest selling act at the legendary McCallum jewel-box theatre in Palm Desert, California.

Charles Darwin argued that music evolved simply as a ploy to lure lovers. For Darwin, it was survival of the sexiest as well as survival of the fittest, thus skill at making music works much like the showy peacock's tail: nature's version of *Let's Spend the Night Together*.

If so, having such raw charisma has bode very well for Howard. He snagged his perfect match and has just celebrated his 60<sup>th</sup> diamond wedding anniversary.

Howard's advice: Listening to classical music has been shown to defuse feelings of stress, improve sleep quality and stimulate better immune function. But making music with others is even better! It promotes better mental health, builds a sense of self-worth and reduces loneliness. It doesn't matter how good you are; just giving it a go will reap rewards. So join a choir or orchestra today!

Howard and Fay have a dog called Ollie -a cocker spaniel, poodle and King Charles cross -who everyone absolutely adores.

Even though he loves to Bach...