

What was she like, my mother?

Rob Piaggio

Time with her was precious. How I will always regret the bout of flu I developed at Easter. It was persistent and would keep me from her bedside, because of her low immunity ... until a few days before her death when it no longer mattered.

My mother was admitted to Wesley Hospital the Tuesday after Easter.

Despite some abnormal blood tests, she was determined to have a happy Easter on Fraser Island first. It seemed as if she knew something we didn't. Although she felt well enough she elected to join a bus group returning to Brisbane instead of returning home. She had developed some bruises.

By Thursday she was diagnosed with myeloid leukaemia and was scheduled for chemotherapy but not without quite some consideration for her age and health.

She opted for it, saying she would regret not trying.

This, though she knew what side effects to expect.

Later she was to say it was worth the try.

It didn't work. The leukaemia was aggressive.

We were to realise this only three days from her death.

She asked the doctor how long.

'A couple of days, to a couple of weeks'.

To which she replied, "Well, that's that!"

She would later say she had no desire to cry.

In any case the chemotherapy had deprived her of tears.

They came instead from 'a bottle'.

