



Rex Moe and second wife June.

Moe, Rex Vernon (1930–2013), and Audrey Maureen (Peacock) (1928–2000)

ROSS GOLDSTONE

Ross Goldstone, M.A. (Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia) retired in 1998 as Senior Pastor, Avondale Memorial Church, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia. New Zealand born, Goldstone has served the Church as a pastor, Conference Youth Director, teacher, and Sessional Lecturer at Avondale College. He has authored nine books relating to Adventist history, including *The Angel Said Australia*. He is also co-author of four other books on Adventist history in Australasia. In retirement Ross Goldstone continues to research and write Adventist Church history.

Rex Moe emerged from poverty in the outback town of Broken Hill, New South Wales, Australia, to become a spiritual leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in several conferences in Australia as well as the president of the Western Pacific Union Mission.

Early Life

Rex Vernon Moe was born in Broken Hill, New South Wales, on the June 9, 1930, the fifth child of Albert and Ethel Moe.¹ Albert had migrated from Norway and chose to change his surname from Kristiansen to Moe for ease of pronunciation and spelling.² While fighting in the First World War, he had inhaled mustard gas, from which he never fully recovered, dying when Rex was 20.³ This left the family in destitution, and they were evicted from their home. A compassionate lady gave them lodging, and Rex took up employment as a miner in order to financially support the family.⁴

Along with his mother, Rex regularly attended both the Salvation Army and Baptist churches. One day Norah Cahar, an Adventist literature evangelist, made contact with Rex's mother. Following studies, Ethel began to attend the Broken Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church, encouraging Rex to accompany her. At first, he adamantly refused to do so but later relented, with the result that Pastor Abbott studied with and baptized both Rex and his mother.⁵

Education and Service

Rex Moe attended the Australasian Missionary College (now Avondale College of Higher Education) in 1948, 1951–1952, and 1954–1957, graduating with a bachelor's degree in theology.⁶ While a mature-aged student, Rex met his future wife, Audrey Maureen Peacock (b. June 16, 1928⁷), daughter of missionaries Pastor and Mrs. Gerald Peacock, who, while a teacher in an adjacent school, used to eat at the college dining room. They united their lives in marriage on January 11, 1956, the service being conducted in the College Chapel by Pastor H. W. Hollingsworth.⁸ Two sons were born to the marriage: Gary John and David Lamont Christianson.⁹

During vacation times, Rex, as with all students training for the ministry at the time, worked as a student literature evangelist. Following his graduation in 1957, he was appointed as a ministerial intern in the South Queensland Conference, working in the evangelistic team of Pastor Geoffrey Ratcliffe.¹⁰ He was ordained to the gospel ministry at the Queensland Camp Meeting of August 15–24, 1963.¹¹ On June 19, 1965, two church buildings at Dalby and Chinchilla in western Queensland were opened and dedicated. The report in the *Australasian Record* noted that "never before in the history of the work of the church have we heard of two almost identical churches in neighboring towns being opened and dedicated on the one day by the same minister. Pastor Rex Moe is the evangelist responsible."¹²

At the beginning of 1966, Rex and Maureen Moe were transferred to the North New South Wales Conference, where they remained until the beginning of 1971.¹³ There, Rex was engaged in pastoral evangelism. They then transferred to the Northern Australia Conference for just one year.¹⁴ At the beginning of 1972, Rex began his first term as President of the North New South Wales Conference—a four-year term until 1975.¹⁵ This was followed by almost five years as president of the West Australian Conference.¹⁶

Recognizing the vast distances to be traveled in Western Australia—the largest state of Australia—and the mining boomtowns of the north, Rex worked closely with the West Australian Adventist Aviation Association, which, with its twin-engine Aztec aircraft, was taking the Adventist message to the remote regions of the conference.¹⁷ Rex Moe challenged the delegates gathered at the Maida Vale Convention Centre for the biennial session of the conference in 1978:

We must reach out in every direction, calling people out, preparing them to meet their God in peace—for I believe we have but a short time. It's time, brethren, it's time.¹⁸

A major achievement of Rex Moe's tenure in the West Australian Conference was the establishment of a modern West Australian Conference headquarters at Gosnells, a suburb to the south of the main city of Perth. Located on the fringe of the rapidly developing southwestern corridor, it replaced the former headquarters in Havelock Street, West Perth.¹⁹

At the Australasian Division Session in 1980 Pastor Rex Moe was appointed President of the Western Pacific Union Mission.²⁰ No doubt Maureen was a great help to him, being a missionary's daughter, as he adjusted to island mission work. He obviously succeeded in his work and was honored in the Queen's Birthday Honors in 1983 with a Member of the Order of the British Empire appointment for his services to church and community.²¹

Rex Moe's final denominational employment was a second term as President of the North New South Wales Conference. He held this position from September 1985 until his retirement in 1996.²² Again, his penchant for building new facilities was in evidence as a new conference headquarters was established and opened on May 27, 1988, in a prominent position on Lake Road, Wallsend, a suburb of Newcastle.²³

North New South Wales Conference camp meetings had, for some years, been held at Byron Bay in the north of the conference. Rex Moe initiated the purchase of a new property at Stuarts Point, adjacent to the existing Yarrahapinni Youth and School Ecology Centre. This new campground was developed into a facility that is of a very high standard. Its idyllic setting and central location have made it a popular venue for various conventions run by the conference as well as other organizations. Many church members use it as a holiday resort when it is not being used for convention purposes.²⁴

Retirement and Later Life

Rex Moe officially retired on January 25, 1996. For a number of years, Maureen's declining health necessitated her being placed into care in the Charles Harrison Nursing Home in Cooranbong, New South Wales. Rex was a faithful visitor to his wife until her death on April 10, 2000.²⁵

On January 21, 2001, Rex married June Snow, a widow living on the outskirts of Wauchope, New South Wales. He spent the remaining years of his life in a rural environment, overlooking a small lake and caring for his extensive vegetable garden. His fruitful life of dedicated service ended in the Port Macquarie, New South Wales, hospital on June 26, 2013, and he is buried alongside Maureen in the Avondale Seventh-day Adventist Cemetery at Cooranbong, New South Wales.²⁶

Faithful to God and His Word; fervent in preaching the gospel and in searching for lost humanity; fearless in confronting evil and those who would cause division in the Church, Rex Moe, the "miner from Broken Hill" could be forthright in speech and a fierce defender of the truth he held dear. He was intolerant of those who would attack the church from within but a loyal and respected leader of those who worked alongside him.

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NOTES

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