

*Images of
Femininity*

A Tribute to my mother Madge Wallace



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Acknowledgments

On Thursday 18th July 1996, the day my mother died, I promised I would take on something that she had so often said she wanted to do.... write a book on Madge Wallace. She held back on doing this, I believe, because although she loved the lime light and was proud of what she had achieved, she was really quite modest and almost humble.

As much as my sister and I adored and admired our mother, I don't think we really appreciated what she had meant to others. To us, she was our "mom" and to our children, she was Granny Madge, but to anyone who had been trained, groomed and employed by Madge, she was an icon, an image of femininity and inspiration. While finding it difficult to separate these two amazing images I had, my special friend Beatrice Kidd, (who knew my mother well) began to "nag" me!

I cannot begin to find the words to thank her for "nagging" and getting me started, for her experienced advice on putting a book together, for the fun and giggles we have had while doing this, but most of all encouraging me to reassemble these beloved memories.

Bev McCormick

January 2010

For my mother and her family

Chapter 1: Humble Beginnings



My mother, Madge Wallace, was a dreamer who, against all odds, set out to make her dreams come true. From a humble beginning, with no formal training, she made a name for herself in the beauty and fashion industry by sheer determination and a passion for glamour and elegance.

She was born in Hillbrow Johannesburg, into a large family of British and Australian origins on 31 August 1914.



English born mother Ethel Spong



*Australian born father Jack Cassel
Wallace*

Images of Femininity

The family, three half sisters Doris, Chrissie and Grace, half brother Donald and Madge, faced a difficult bleak future in a world impoverished by devastation of the First World War. In 1920 her favourite brother, Ronald Douglas, nicknamed Bill was born.



Baby Madge

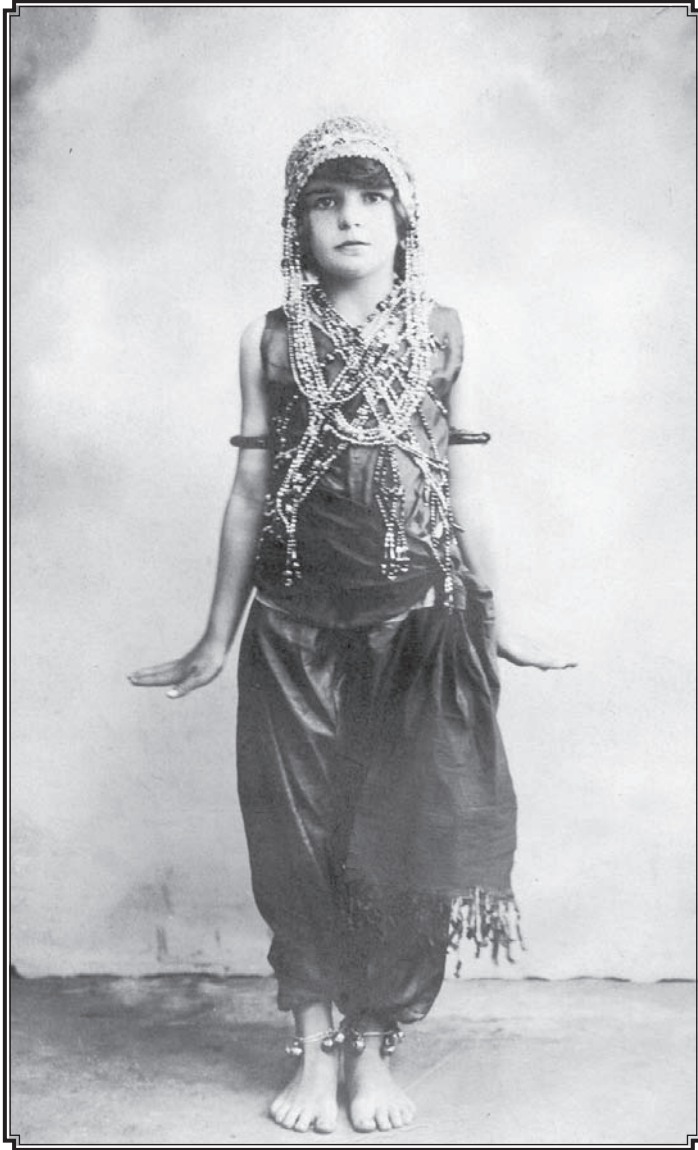


Brother Bill

My mother often entertained us with her many fond re-collections of her childhood and the concerts and home theatre evenings her mother staged at home to keep everyone's spirits high during the difficult war and post war years. Her adored and pretty mother,

Chapter 1: Humble Beginnings

Ethel, fired her passion for performance and display in these home concerts, shows and dressing up parades and these childhood experiences lit the spark in Madge for theatre, glamour and fashion.



*A young Madge performing as Ali Baba in a
pantomime*