

Butterflies by Susanne Gervay

Dr Hugh Martin OAM

*President of the Australian and New Zealand Burn Association and
Head of the Burn Unit, The Children's Hospital Westmead, Sydney.*

Every survivor has a story. Often the story is of interest, and even more often instructive. "Butterflies" is the story of a burn survivor, and is both interesting and instructive. It explores the complex areas of the emotional impact of a burn on the individual and family while giving insight into the world of hospitals, patients and doctors. It traces the development of the personality from insecurity and relative isolation to a healthier level of self esteem that enables the individual to form balanced relationships with family and friends. It shows how the inner person can triumph over a preoccupation with surface scars and know that basic values of commitment, caring and trust are more important than the texture of the skin.

"Butterflies" has relevance outside the narrow circle of burn survivors and their families. It shows the ebb and flow of emotions that affect us all, particularly in the transition between childhood and adulthood, and how parenting and family life make these bearable.

Those of us who are involved in the world of burns know how survivors need help from time to time, but slowly develop a depth of character and an inner strength which is rarely seen in others. Like tempering steel, the process of passing through the fire helps make a person of exceptional quality. "Butterflies" captures these subtleties for the reader, and gives a stunning insight into a difficult topic.

Louise Sauvage OAM

World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability Australian Female Athlete of the Year.



"Challenges are faced by each of us, every day of our life. Those 'challenges', the building of individual characters, though which are provided to some are greater than others.

Butterflies is a story about individuals dealing with life, growing and developing as a family and as friends. And, in particular it is about the emotions and consequences faced by one individual who has been given the opportunity to gain strength and build character around her life.

Life is often not easy, can often be perceived as cruel and can be questioned. However, *Butterflies* shows that life is also full of many wonderful people and that those most important to each of us are our family and friends who are there with us through all our 'challenges'."