



I BELONG TO NO ONE
Gwen Wilson
Hachette
Australia,
\$29.99.

raped that she contributed to it. Before the Whitlam Government legislated for change there was no such thing as contraception for unmarried women, no family planning clinics, no legal abortion, no-fault divorces – nothing like that existed.”

Although it has taken years, Wilson now has a much stronger relationship with the child she gave up for adoption.

“The adoption has been beneficial for him. He grew up in a normal, loving family. He has a successful career with his own business and he’s married now with his own child.” she says. “The adoption gave him all those opportunities.”

But she was coerced into giving him up. The minister of the orphanage he had been placed in had told her that, if she didn’t sign the papers, he would end up a state ward.

“You don’t hear about this part of women’s history,” she says. “What I hope the book does is make people more aware of what this term ‘forced adoption’ means. Because of the attitudes of the time, I would say that even my situation was a forced adoption.”

Wilson left her marriage the day her baby turned one.

“I never thought I was leaving him behind forever. I thought I was leaving him for that day, or for at most a few weeks until I had a job and a place to live.”

But she soon faced a custody battle.

Wilson, who had been dux of her class, had given up a senior Secondary Bursary and a Commonwealth Scholarship when she fell pregnant. It wasn’t until her 50s that she returned to study, completing a masters in electronic commerce at the University of Wollongong.

“I want people to understand that you can have an unhappy upbringing,” she says. “You can miss out on the perfect education, the family home, the perfect mum and dad. You can miss all of that and still triumph over adversity. You don’t have to be defined by your circumstances. You have the power to change the negative messages we send to ourselves. The only thing I didn’t learn was how to be a mother myself.”

■ *I Belong to No One* is available from Hachette Australia publishers. A book launch will be held on July 12 at the Links Seaside in Wollongong.



Author Gwen Wilson has written her memoirs about her early years growing up with a mentally ill mother and later giving up her own child for adoption in the years before radical social change. Picture: GREG TOTMAN



LONGINES®

SIMONS JEWELLERS
160 CROWN ST, WOLLONGONG, NSW 2500 | 02 4229 9430



Conquest Classic Moonphase