

# EULOGY – James Colin Hyde

8<sup>th</sup> May 1923 – 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2018

Quiet, sincere, unassuming, with a dry sense of humour, highly principled.

James Colin HYDE will usually be found quietly in the background, listening. He was truly a quite achiever and very much a man of distinction.

Not only was he my Dad, he was a real friend. We could talk for ages, often many times a day and not run out of things to say to each other – never arguing never getting cross with each other.

Not always politically correct in this modern day – some might say it is our Northern Irish protestant roots coming out, but Dad was always a very fair man – street wise, intelligent but very fair. His way produced results, delivered enduring gratitude and respect for all those who knew him, yet being tough enough not to be taken for ride too often.

A very bright and capable person, Dad had a list of interests and achievements in his life to be proud of – and at the same time spent the prime of his in New Guinea with the armed forces during WW2.

As a young man after the war he and Mum moved from Warwick to Townsville, Dad went back to school at night to supplement his trade of fitting & turning to gain qualifications in engineering, drafting & technical drawing and refrigeration.

\*\* Such determination. After a day standing over a metal lathe at the railway workshops, riding his push bike 4 miles to and from work, he would do the same trip back to tech college at night, all through the heat of the tropical summers. “You know Son”, he would say to me, “what kept me going was my love for your Mother and her love for me. I would get home from work filthy dirty, greasy and sweaty, and your Mother would greet me all nice and clean, hair brushed, with a nice dress on and give me a kiss, then send me to shower. I would so much look forward to seeing her.”

What a wonderful example of the old fashioned values of love and responsibility.

Dad left the Railway workshops and went back to RAAF, this time as a marine engineer on the crash boats - he was only the third engineer in Qld to be certified on engines over 1000 HP – Certificate No 3 was a proud moment for him. There were many perks of this job, not the least of which was a continuous diet of reef fish. That tradition continued until his final days at Buderim Gardens last Xmas when we would get him fresh fish & oysters from Mooloolaba. \*\* That was one of his favourites.

One night over a few ports (Dad did like a port after dinner) we were talking about family money matters when he said to me, “you should have seen your mothers face when I brought my first pay packet home from the railways and gave it all to her. Her mouth opened, eyes popped out – what am I to do with this?, she asked. Mum soon works that out, but again the trust & honesty Dad showed from that time forward has been a feature of his entire life, and a guiding beacon for myself and many others who knew him.

Today Dad stands tall, head & shoulders above most.

Growing up with Dad was a busy time. Early starts to be at swimming lessons, back home for a breakfast that Mum had cooked and then getting Dad off to work a bit after 7. The pace continued, the bar was set high, but achievable. Weekend jobs like mowing the lawn (you would not dare miss a blade of grass), cleaning out the chook pen, killing & plucking chooks for dinner, and gardening were all regular features of life with Dad. Everything had a standard of acceptability and as a kid you made dam sure it was met.

Dad loved his gardening – so long as you could eat the produce. He would grow just about everything from vegetables to fruit trees. Peanuts, corn, beans, potatoes, peas, lettuce etc etc all found their way to the dinner table.

Dogs too were an ongoing constant at home with Dad – wire- haired terriers initially with Possie and Grubby, then a number of fox terriers – Sadie, Trixie, Sonny Boy. More recently, Pugs became his companion of choice with Rosie almost ready for her own care facilities. Such a commotion one day when Dad was out picking the beans for dinner, carefully selecting the ones that had the right maturity - not to old & not to young and was putting them into a bucket. Behind him the dog was coming along eating what he had just picked. There was Dad chasing the dog around the yard with the mut just keeping out of reach. As a kid, that was just too funny for words.

One day Dad came home with a new spray to control the many and varied tropical pests that also fed on his prized vege garden – perfectly safe he assured us, and killed everything stone dead. He would mix it up in bucket with his hand, pour it into the old Rega pump sprayer and off he go covering everything with a good layer of DDT. Of course he was appropriately dressed – usually work boots, Jacky-Howe and shorts. That went on for years. How times have changed.

There were always projects under way at home – Dad built a circular saw bench so he could make furniture for the house. That continued with every house up to their last in Townsville, at Wentworth Av. He made that entire kitchen, the living room cabinets (which are still in the unit at Buderim) bedroom furniture and anything else that was needed. There was always something to make, something to service and for me as a kid, I grew up with this enormous encyclopaedia of practical know how and drive to get things done.

The pace of life continued for years until us kids left home, Dad left RAAF and eventually bought a small engine business – Townsville Mower Service.

Dad ran and grew this business for years, winning contracts up and down the Qld coast, with the military, sugar mills, shires, Mt Isa Mines and many more. He was in his element. One his proudest moments that I remember was when he made a young aboriginal boy he took on as an apprentice years before, the foreman of the shop. Eric stayed with Dad until he sold. It wasn't all smooth sailing though – there were many ups and downs in business and staff but Dad's strong hand kept the rudder firmly cantered, and he built a great business that still operates today.



Retirement came easily to Dad after he sold the business, mainly because he was already used to managing his own time. Only the interests and activity changed.

He moved to Toowoomba and established the wood tuning club there and was an active participant for many years, winning many shows and teaching others the finer art of tuning. Some of his work is nothing short of stunning.

The cold of Toowoomba eventually got the better of him and he moved to Buderim Gardens in his 80<sup>th</sup> year.

He loved his time at Buderim Gardens - Dad was always busy. That was his nature. There was always things to make & do. Even well into his nineties he had his small vege garden and would winge about the grubs in his beans, the bamboo over the back fence sucking the goodness out of his soil, the turkeys etc. Another task he dedicated himself to was the washing up – no dishwashers required, and even when finally provided, sat idle most of the time. Such was his dedication to Mum, washing up time was a time of communication and connection for them both. This tradition only ended when there were medically separated.

Life was good at Buderim Gardens for Dad. He loved the climate, the people, and the closeness of facilities, going to the Spit to walk the dogs was always a highlight. Very recently, after Mum was admitted to Arcare, I remember Dad asking me how to cook all these new things he bought at IGA. He had seen Elizabeth & I cooking for him and decided to have a go himself.

AT the young age of 94 Dad discovered cooking!! Sadly with failing health he ran out energy to persist, but the interest and determination remained.

Dad was fiercely independent and defensive of his ability to make decisions and had to feel that all the decisions were his – when people told Dad what was best for him he would get very upset leaving me to calm him down. His mind simply had not acknowledged the age of his body. In his last weeks and days he must have asked me a dozen times to stop people telling him he had to go to a nursing home. He was absolutely determined he would not end up in what he called a “mindless institution” - and nor did he.

What a great man right to the end – he really wanted to see his 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary but alas, fell just 9 weeks short.

I will not ever forget his final words to me just hours before he closed his eyes for the last time. – they are personal, private and enduring.

Goodbye Dad. I love you with all my heart and will miss you very much.

I only hope when it is my turn in the box, my children can tell of the love I have for them as I have for you.

Love for Ever. Your Son & friend.