

Son's Eulogy for His Father

Duty, decency, reliability, honour, dignity, respect: these are all qualities that my father not only held in high esteem but practised every day during his time on this earth.

He was a serious and disciplined man, but he could never resist the opportunity to have a laugh with friends and loved ones, given half the chance.

He saw a lot during his lifetime: a world ravaged by war, (he was himself served in the armed forces in Vietnam), and an uncertain world with the Cold War, the Oil Crisis, and Iraq all understandably influencing his views on the post-war world in which he himself grew up and, later, raised his own family.

Let alone the social and cultural revolution exploding around him with the onset of the 1960s.

Dad was an only child, who lived in and around Sydney up until his retirement from the motor industry, where he moved with Mum to the Central Coast.

They married young—at age 20—and remained happily together for over half a century.

When free of their parental responsibilities, Dad would whisk Mum off for some mad adventure, often without her knowing where they were going.

As a father of three though, he was often happiest when left to his own devices—whether it was building a shed, tending to the garden, or fixing one of his cars.

He was a self-professed petrol head and loved nothing more than jumping in the car and driving—sometimes for hours—for some much-needed relief and relaxation from a family of five.

More often than not, he wouldn't be gone for that long, but admitted that he loved driving so much, he looked for any excuse to have a spin. His precious Austin Healey was his most prized possession—a car that he drove till the day he died.

When Susan, Claire and myself moved out of home and started families of our own, I began to understand my father in new way.

We were able to find time to sit and discuss what it means to be a parent, particularly in a modern world that's fast-changing and very different to the one in which either of us were born.

Dad gave sage advice on everything from teaching my kids manners and responsibility, to the other important area of family life: keeping one's partner happy and the marriage healthy and alive.

Dad was a straightforward man who demanded little from those around him, and who expected only the best for his three children.

Provided he heard regularly from us all—and saw us whenever possible—he was content.

And although in his final years, we'd all moved on to different parts of the world, that bond was never broken.

To me, Dad's finest quality was his patience: an inherent ability to listen, to absorb and to offer a point of view based on quiet, measured wisdom.

I'll never forget the time when I asked him what I should do about having to move overseas for my career: "Do what you feel, what you believe is right. Follow your gut, your heart, and you can't go wrong."

It's difficult to imagine him not being around and I'm not sure how we will all cope.

The grandchildren, Billy and Leo will miss him dearly.

It's strange to think that I can't just give him a call or pop around to have one of our good old yarns.

Dad lived a long and happy life, and only succumbed to ill health right at the very end.

He was an imposing figure of a man, a tall, dark, handsome character whose reassuring presence we all felt during difficult times.

As we gather here today to remember and commemorate his life, let bid him farewell as we mourn the loss of a lively, dignified soul.

A soul that brought joy and fulfilment to many, and whose legacy will live on forever.