

# Dad's Eulogy

On behalf of my brother David, sister Louise, myself and our families I'd like to thank you all for coming today. I'd also like to acknowledge our darling mum who we wish could be here if she was able to in mind and body.

We loved our dad and we always will.

His family and his work were the most important things in his life.

He was born in Fiji and had an idyllic early childhood. Sure, there was the time he was almost eaten by a shark in the swimming pool by the ocean, and the time he got trapped in a cave and put his hand in a nest of scorpions. But overall he loved Fiji and it played an important role throughout his life. Sadly things changed and dad, his sister Marie and his mum Agnes moved to Scotland. They had hard times, and I think dad's strength of character and determination drove him to make the best of things and succeed. He studied medicine, luckily for us met my mum at a dance and then had us. We came to Australia in 1967 on a memorable six week boat trip.

I think dad's experiences as a child influenced his life greatly, whether subconsciously or consciously. Cornerstones of his character were honour, pride, determination, drive and generosity. He was dedicated to providing for, and supporting, his family.

Life can be hard and to have the complete, unwavering and clear love and support from both our dad and mum was a strong foundation for all three of us. That is something that should never be taken for granted nor underestimated.

Our dad made it clear to us that we could be anything we wanted to be, and that is exactly what we did, all training in different fields. He never pushed us along any specific track. He taught us that we were no lesser or no better than anyone, and that all we needed to do was try our hardest and be proud of our best.

His quiet disappointment when he knew you hadn't done your best was enough to make you try harder. I recall explaining to my parents how I was going to go to Mallacoota during swatvac in my first year of uni with my new surfy boyfriend since it would be a great, quiet spot to study. Needless to say I didn't do that well in my exams. I knew, dad knew. I didn't do that again.

He would do anything to support and help us. I've read many of the tributes from his colleagues describing him as a problem solver. My sister remembers having a problem with our school when she wanted to do Latin in grade 12 and needed this language for her intended uni course. Since she was the only one, the headmaster refused. Naturally dad organised a meeting with the headmaster and Lou. He asked the headmaster to look out the window and tell him what he saw. Confused the headmaster said 'some trees'. Dad said look further. Then it dawned on the headmaster that he could see the boys school Xavier nearby. So that of course led to Lou going to Xavier each week for Latin classes, something both she and the boys no doubt enjoyed.

Dad could be a harsh critic and had high standards. My brother remembers being driven to school by him, and spending most of every trip evaluating the performance of the other drivers. This trait has rubbed off on David and I.

We of course assumed dad could fix any, and all, problems. When our guinea pig was at death's door, naturally we assumed dad would fix him. No doubt privately he was worried, but he dutifully performed external cardiac massage. While I don't think there was any mouth to mouth involved, luckily for all concerned our guinea pig bounced back.

I remember dad taking us swimming every Sunday morning, then back for Beroccas and the best scrambled eggs I have ever had. I remember us visiting castles on weekends when we lived in Edinburgh, always having ox tail soup and bap rolls for lunch. I remember dad's pleasure in gardening, making sure his tomato plants had one main stem, with side stems completely out of

the question since they messed up his perfect arrangement. I remember his vendetta against crickets and fruit bats in our Brisbane garden. I remember Dad and I going to the footy to see our Carlton, and he would scream and shout at Collingwood fans. This might surprise you since he could be a very reserved man.

Dad believed that the vast majority of time he was right. A typical example was his debate with David's wife Eleanor during a family holiday about whether the Sun was behind or in front of the rainbow. Ellie suggested that the viewer is between the Sun and the rainbow. Dad argued the opposite. As a wonderful artist Ellie photographed this scene and it hung above dad's bed. In his last days, Dad finally acknowledged he might have been wrong about the rainbow....Now some may say, in particular our spouses and children, that we have inherited that particular trait of usually being right.

He wasn't materialistic. He wasn't superficial. He could be direct. He would decide on a course of action and focus on how he could achieve what he wanted to achieve. Again, I think we three have inherited these characteristics. Ellie describes us all as being 'unrelenting' in character.

He was incredibly generous to each of us, always helping us in whichever way he could. He made our lives much easier than they could have been, and this is something I think we appreciate even more as we've aged. Seeing him smile with his grandkids, especially when they were little, always made me feel good. He was forever taking photos of Isabelle, Lydia and Stella. We all carry a passion and commitment to be as generous and supportive to our kids, as our dad was for us. To make their lives as good as they possibly can be.

He was a proud man and a private man. He was a man of few words, and most definitely even fewer in the last couple of years. His work was his hobby, and he found retirement difficult, and not being able to do things he used to do hard. I know he valued his friendships and keeping in touch with old colleagues. The last three years of our mum's illness weighed heavily on him, as it has for us.

He found it hard to express himself, and I don't know if this was because of his difficult childhood or because he was simply a man of his generation. Regardless, we never ever had any doubt that he loved us completely. He showed his love in the ways he was able to.

We take great comfort in the fact that our dad had a good life, an interesting life, a life full of achievements. Fiji was terribly important to him and I think he was especially proud of his contribution to the Fiji School of Medicine. In his work, dad didn't seek recognition for what he achieved, although definitely valued it when his contribution was recognised. I think he would be very touched with the tributes we've received from colleagues, although of course he'd be embarrassed at the same time.

I know he was very proud of us all – his kids, his grandkids and our partners. And we have always been proud of dad.

In his typical no nonsense way, he decided he had had enough a few weeks ago. We are incredibly grateful to BUPA Greensborough, where he lived for the last few months, whose staff treated him with great respect, and who helped us as a family, and continue to help mum.

I am very glad that all three of us were together and able to spend a lot of time with him in his last days. As a family we take comfort in the fact that he isn't suffering anymore.

When we are ready, we plan to visit Fiji as a family and scatter our dad's ashes, which was a wonderful suggestion of Lou's.

We loved our dad and we always will.