



CURTIN

TIMOTHY ROGER CHAMPION

15 November 1937 – 31 July 2013

Passed away peacefully at
Clare Holland House.

Loved husband of Pamela.

Father of Matthew and Rachel and
father-in-law of Nicole.

Proud grandfather of Alexander.

Sincere thanks to the caring staff at
Clare Holland House for their care of Tim.

The funeral service for Tim will be held in the
Bluegum Chapel of William Cole Funerals,
60 Nettlefold Street, Belconnen on Monday
12 August 2013, commencing at 1.30pm
followed by a burial at Gungahlin Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers a donation to
Clare Holland House would be appreciated.

Envelopes will be available at the service.



WILLIAM COLE FUNERALS

Canberra 6253 3655

Excellence in Funeral Service

A Celebration
of
The Life
Of
Timothy Roger Champion Curtin



15th November 1937 –31st July 2013

Blue Gum Chapel

Pre-ceremony music: Schubert, Bryn Terfel and Malcolm Martineau -
Favourite Schubert Songs

Introductory Music: Schubert, "Ständchen, *Serenade*"

Introduction

My name is Gail Everard, and I have been asked by Tim's family to conduct this service. On behalf of Pam, children, Matthew, Rachel, and daughter-in-law, Nicole, and grandson, Alexander, welcome, as we remember and celebrate Tim's life, and gently say farewell to him.

The family are particularly mindful of those who have travelled some distance to be here.

Tim's family is grateful to those who have provided the family support in recent times, most notably, the wonderful staff and volunteers at Clare Holland House, Robyn Martin, Mary Bomford, Robin Torrence, Peter White and many other friends.

The family would like to acknowledge those who are unable to be here today. These include daughter Rachel, daughter-in-law Nicole, grandson Alexander, friends from his university days in London, and the many family and friends overseas.

Tim was born in 1937 at Champion Reef, Kolar Goldfields in India to English parents, Ron and Sarah. Ron was a mining engineer. As was the practice for ex-pats in those days, Tim was sent to boarding school at a very young age. He found the holidays short and school very long. One of the highlights of coming home was to see his beloved dog, Shenko.

Dogs remained an important part of Tim's life wherever it was practical to have one. Polly was faithful companion during his two stints in Nairobi. Tam kept Tim and Pam company for many years in Canberra where more recently Eric and Lacey have been valued companions.

In 1957, Tim was one of the first undergraduates at an external college of the University of London, the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts. In 1961 he took up a Commonwealth scholarship at the London School of Economics to do a masters degree in public finance.

He returned to the University College in Salisbury/Harare to take up a lectureship in economics. He married Ann Mervis in 1964. Matthew was born in 1965 and Rachel in 1969.

Tim built a career as a specialist in the economics of developing countries. It was a period when much of the promise of the post-colonial period evaporated in Africa under the pernicious influence of the Cold War and the belief that foreign aid alone might drag the continent out of poverty. He worked in Tanzania, Kenya, Egypt and Nigeria as well as traveling widely in the region before a long final stage of his career in on the other side of the world in Papua New Guinea.

He applied himself enthusiastically to opportunities where he felt real change could be made, working hard on projects like dams and tea estates while fighting rear-guard actions against the vanity schemes that so many governments were tempted by. Foreign correspondents visiting Nairobi, Cairo or Lagos would often seek him out to find out what was going on behind the scenes.

By the late 1980s, Tim found himself as a single man again in Port Moresby. It was here that he met Pam and they married in 1990. With family so far flung, while working in Papua New Guinea, they regularly travelled to be with Tim's children in Europe and Pam's family in New Zealand. They've enjoyed, tennis, golf, bridge and entertaining with lots of dinner parties.

In retirement Tim had become an avid genealogist and loved to relay stories of his links to greatness, especially his link to royalty! Tim's great grandmother was Ann Walters, nanny to Queen Victoria, and has kept a wonderful record of her time in the palace.

There is also another, yet to be proved connection of somewhat convoluted descendency that Tim discovered, which he claims, would make him the "rightful King of England"!

While he enjoyed the storytelling, the essence of the man lies in humility and compassion. There is a wonderful poem by Rudyard Kipling that Tim would sometimes quote from, and it does sum up his philosophy on life beautifully.

If...

If you can keep your head when all about you

Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,

If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,

But make allowance for their doubting too;

If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,

Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,

Or being hated, don't give way to hating,

*And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:
If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;*

If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim;

If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster

*And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken*

Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,

Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,

*And stoop and build 'em up with wornout tools:
If you can make one heap of all your winnings*

And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,

And lose, and start again at your beginnings

*And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew*

To serve your turn long after they are gone,

And so hold on when there is nothing in you

*Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'
If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,*

Or walk with kings - nor lose the common touch,

If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,

*If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute*

With sixty seconds' worth of distance run -

Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,

And - which is more - you'll be a Man my son!

Rudyard Kipling

Only those who have suffered the loss of a beloved husband, father, father-in-law and grand father, can really begin to understand the impact of Tim's death on his immediate family. However, the impact spreads well beyond his immediate family. The loss of someone we know well seems to leave our own souls open to the reality of our own mortality, and to a recognition of our tenuous grip on the life that, at other times, we take so much for granted.

Memory and love unite us in a myriad of ways that are significant to us all. Tim was a husband, a father, always there through the good times and the difficult times, grandfather, friend, esteemed mentor and colleague, and within each role he played his part, in the way only he knew how.

We are here today in a final act of unity to celebrate his life, to speak his name and his actions, and remember that he lived and walked in our world. It gives us the opportunity to say "farewell".

Nothing can erase the depth of experience that he faced, nothing can detract from the joy, love, fear or pain that he endured, as the past, that special tapestry he wove, known intimately only to those around him, will remain sacred and secure. His influence endures in the consequences, which flowed from his character and deeds. They are part of your heritage, a little piece inside you.

There are times, however, when we need to remind ourselves that life has a beginning and an end. Life exists between the birth and death of individuals, who in turn pass the process on to their children. An individual's life-span could be brief, or lengthy. However within it lies experience, purpose and achievements – some great and others uneventful. What each individual makes of it is, in itself, mortality. Each soul leaves a legacy; each memory is a bridge to connect one heart to another.

Memories are therefore priceless treasures to bring out into the sunshine and dwell upon. The beginning of our lives, a union with another, anniversaries, birthdays and the passing of a loved one, are not just milestones, but celebrations and occasions on which to meet and greet and reminisce, and to continue the flow and storage of memories. When we fully acknowledge their significance, our heart and the hearts of others are deeply touched and we are glad we dug deep and discovered many golden moments that somehow blurred with the passage of time.

Death re-ignites important values and enables us to cherish those qualities we are most grateful for. Tim was a thoughtful, gentle, kind, patient man, a determined perfectionist, intelligent and hard working. He was dedicated to his goals and all he held dear to his own heart. He therefore leaves behind a legacy of worth. He epitomises a life well lived.

Musicians Irene and Gupta Desilva volunteer every Thursday fortnight to play at Clare Holland House. Tim looked forward to their performances and the three pieces they are playing today were his favourites.

Live Music Presentation – “Serenade to spring”, Rolf Lovland.

Played by Irene and Gupta Desilva

The Eulogy

Matthew, Tim’s son will present the eulogy

First of all, on a chilly day in Canberra, it warms the heart to see so many of my father’s friends here today.

The day my father died here in Canberra, my wife Nicola, our son Alexander and I were on holiday in Greece. It was a long way away to be at such a time.

But long distances, plenty of travel, and life in new countries have always been part of our lives as a family, from when Rachel, my sister, and I were small children, for my father when he was growing up, and for his father before that.

It is in fact in Greece where I have one of my clearest and happiest memories as a small boy. On holiday on the island of Samos, I discovered with my father one of the most important aspects of a protected Mediterranean beach. If you build a sandcastle close to the water's edge, there's a very good chance it will be there the next day because there's so little difference between high and low tide.

On that trip in the early 1970s, we were on the way back to the U.K. from Tanzania where my father was working as an economist . He had previously lectured in Salisbury, today Harare, in what was called Southern Rhodesia, where I was born, and then in York in England where Rachel was born. We set out soon again for Africa, with my father initially headed for Zambia, but ending up in Kenya. A couple of years later we were back in England when my father continued to travel frequently to Africa. He worked a second stint in Kenya, then in Egypt, followed by four years in Nigeria. This made for a magnificently exotic childhood for Rachel and me.

But there was more to our time in Africa than safari parks, beach holidays and picnics in the bush. My father's willingness to work in such supposedly "difficult" countries, the fact that he enjoyed it and was clearly good at it, taught us an important lesson: that of taking people at face value regardless of the colour of their skin, their culture, or their education. My father's years growing up in the white-dominated southern Africa of the 1950s and 1960s, with all its hatred and oppression, seemed to make him particularly determined on that front. The affection that so many Kenyans, Nigerians, Egyptians, Papua New Guineans and others had for my father over the years underscore the point.

My father's time in Africa and his commitment to the countries he worked in left his mark on me in another way. I don't remember much of the detail of dinner-time conversations I overheard as a boy but when the talk turned to African politics and economics it seemed to have a music of its own, from Kenyatta and Kaunda to Nkomo and Nyrere. And in those pre-Internet days, there was also the never-ending quest to find the best signal for the BBC World Service which my father listened to religiously. This helped to turn me into an incurable news junky.

My father worked hard but he played hard too. Looking back, I suspect he had a secret quest to sing some Gilbert & Sullivan in public and organize at least one cricket match in every capital he worked in. He pretty much pulled it off. Music was an important part of his life - he had eclectic taste from Gounod and Schubert to Cat Stevens. As a boy, I remember working through his collection of the Gilbert & Sullivan records with not too many complaints from him about the all the scratches I must have left behind on the vinyl. He was always modest about his singing talents, too modest Rachel would say, and she would know, as an accomplished musician herself.

My father's love of cricket could demonstrate the determined or obstinate side in him, depending on your point of view. One day when we were living in Cambridge, he announced to my mother he had bought a cricket net for our garden. What a nice if slightly self-indulgent idea, you might think, from a cricket-loving father with a cricket-loving son. My mother's concern wasn't unreasonable. The garden in question was attached to a small house on an English housing estate and so was of the commensurate size. It was so small that the guy-ropes for the net had to be fixed into ground the other side of the garden fence. Fortunately, that summer, the estate was still being built so my father could take advantage of the waste ground next door. The net was fantastic in that I could launch dramatic lofted cover drives with no fear of breaking the kitchen windows, only a few feet away, or pull the ball high over midwicket without smashing the neighbour's greenhouse on other side. By the next summer the developers were

well on the way to finishing the house next door so there was no question of a net the next summer.

It wasn't just music and cricket that my father loved. He enjoyed playing golf most of all. He swapped it for tennis as his sport of choice only late in life. He played hockey as a young man. There was squash in the draining humidity of Port Moresby. There was chess too and bridge. He climbed Mount Kilimanjaro. He was a keen photographer for many years. Even my father would admit that he was rather better at some of these pursuits than others. But they were central to the full, rounded life he led, showing by example that so much of life is in the taking part.

Then there were my father's intellectual pursuits. In retirement, he kept up his economic research, co-authoring a book on land reform in PNG and writing other articles. Most notably, he joined the chorus of climate-change skeptics. In that, my father showed how much he loved challenging the received wisdom. He was good at detecting self-serving arguments and weighty conclusions drawn from poor maths or faulty interpretations of statistics. He could and often did overstate his case. But as my uncle Jonathan Mervis, who as the brother of my late mother Ann knew my father from the early 60s, wrote in a letter to me: Two attributes of Tim are worth noting, he was never cowed by ... hostility to his views, nor frightened of expressing them.

Of course, living and working abroad had its downsides for my father. As small children, Rachel and I saw little of him at times. As teenagers, I was at boarding school and Rachel stayed at school in England with our mother. But it is his presence I remember, not the absences, his love, his kindness, his advice which always fell short of hectoring.

As he got older, my father searched harder for his family's roots in and beyond the village of Wedmore in Somerset where his father grew up. In Ireland, where his great grandfather came from, the lack of parish records ensured the trail went cold quite quickly. So it was on the English side, the Champions, the Looks, and the Walters, on which he focused his research. His ancestors would surely have appreciated a famous victory for the Wedmore 3d XI cricket team almost exactly four years ago. Five Curtins--my father, myself, his cousin Peter, and his sons Edward and Charles--took part, with a sixth Curtin, Alexander, watching from the boundary.

My father wasn't content just with the genealogy. For him it was a way of connecting with the living as much as digging into the past. He would seek out distant relatives wherever he could. As the eldest first cousin of his generation,

and without siblings of his own, he also worked increasingly hard to keep in touch with his far-flung family, welcoming them to in Canberra and always looking up family on visits to England and southern Africa.

Live Music Presentation: 'Cavatina' theme from the movie 'The Deer Hunter,' music by Stanley Mye played by Irene and Gupta Desilva

Tribute

Presented by Andrew Pawley

Although I've known Pam since our student days in Auckland in the 1960s I didn't meet Tim till 1993. It was in Port Moresby. My botanist companion and I were en route to a spell of fieldwork in Madang Province and Pam kindly invited us to stay with them for a couple of days in their spacious apartment on the hill in Moresby. Our friendship blossomed after the Curtins moved to Canberra a few years later.

I want to talk mainly about two sides of Tim that I will always remember with affection and nostalgia: **Tim as son of Empire and as cricket tragic.**

Tim was always a great reminiscer and liked to tell stories of places where he had lived, studied or worked and of the people he knew in these places. And what a lot of places there were! There was almost no part of the former British Empire that he did not have connections with. He often reminded us that he was born in Bangalore near the Kolar Goldfields, where his father Ronald was a mining engineer and Tim was therefore a citizen of India. On the other hand, he was a South African because he spent his primary and secondary school years in Johannesburg and Natal. On yet another hand, he was a Zimbabwean because he went to university in Salisbury/Harare, as part of the first cohort of undergraduates there, and later taught economics there and was briefly imprisoned for opposing the white Nationalist government. However, in the late 1920s and early 30s his father spent six years in the Morobe Gold fields in Papua New Guinea, so Tim's PNG roots go back a long way. And on top of all this, he was a loyal Englishman, a Somerset man, and in particular a Wedmore man, his father's ancestral village.

And Tim's work as an economic consultant took him all over Africa. If I happened to mention I have a friend in Cairo he would recount stories of his six months working there as a consultant. One day I mentioned Lagos and he recalled impressions of the time he worked in Nigeria. He knew everyone that mattered in Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia. At times it seemed there was no corner of the former British Empire in Africa that he did not know, and that every current or past African minister of finance or education had been either his fellow student, or his pupil. Some of these promising young men had turned out badly in the end. He would say, of a certain Zimbabwean politician, "I knew So and so well in his student days. He was a decent fellow, an idealist. Now look at him -- as corrupt as the rest."

Now a few impressions of Tim as sportsman.

He was for many years a keen golfer. He was a useful, quite unorthodox tennis player. After he and Pam came to Canberra they became regular members of our little group that plays geriatric doubles on Sunday mornings. But as time is short I will resist the temptation to talk about all this, except to comment on the single most highly eccentric element of his tennis game, his serve. As I told Tim, his serve was a triple threat.

First, as he constantly changed the point where he was serving from, from the centre of the service line to the far right or left, only those receivers who were good at geometry could adjust their position to the varying angles. Second, either by accident or intent, the pace of his serve varied from moderately brisk to snail's pace, a pace so slow that it was hard to for the receiver to time his return shot.

Finally, and most disconcertingly, Tim would often toss the ball up three, four, five times before he got the angle of the toss right, by which time the receiver had lost concentration, anyway. After a couple of hours of sedate play we would sit for another hour in the rotunda over coffee and biscuits, debating the big issues of the world. Tim had solutions for many of these.

Finally to cricket. I was delighted to discover that we were both cricket tragics, i.e. grown men hopelessly in love with this ancient and complex game. Both of us had tons of books about it (cricket has a very fine literature going back almost

two hundred years) and I'm sure we had studied its history more thoroughly than we ever studied for university courses. We exchanged books and argued about batting and bowling statistics, dates and other details. We reminisced about great players we had watched and in some cases, had met and talked with. I would boast about my conversations with Everton Weekes, Arthur Morris, Bert Sutcliffe and Frank Tyson and about how the club pros at my club in Auckland included the future England Test players, Wilf Slack and Devon Malcolm, and about how I once got a letter and a signed photo from Don Bradman. Tim would go on about his favourite Somerset and South African players of today and yesteryear and about himself playing in club games in Harare with the great Colin Bland and about scoring 30 or 40 in a match in Nairobi.

After the tasty dinners Pam would cook at Spence, Tim often pressed his guests to stay till the small hours and watch a current Test match. But the highlight of each year was our collective pilgrimage to Sydney to watch the full five days of the New Year's Test at the SCG. The nucleus of our group, who became known as the Old Codgers, consisted of Tim, Jack Golson, Jack Mabbutt and me, often joined by wives and other friends for a day or two. We almost always sat in the Bradman Stand in front of the Press Box, where we had a good view of play from behind the bowler's arm and could watch the journalists and TV commentators pass by.

How did we get the name Old Codgers? A certain friend told us -- true or not -- that he was sitting at home watching the Sydney Test on the telly when the cameras panned to where our group were sitting and the commentator, Tony Grieg, said "Look at those old codgers! They come here every year." But in 2006 we began a painful boycott of the annual SCG match, on a matter of principle. Outraged the greed shown by Cricket Australia in their handling of ticket sales in a way that effectively excluded old faithfuls like us, we withheld our valuable custom from the SCG Test for several years, and were content to watch it on the telly.

Now, stumps have been drawn and Tim's long innings is closed. As for me, I will have to go on being a cricket tragic on my own. Things won't be the same without my fellow tragic but the good memories will remain. Thanks for that, Tim.

Celebrant

Pam mentioned to me last week that Tim would be so cross to be missing the current test matches.

This has been but a glimpse of the story of Tim Curtin – loving husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather, and a dear and trusted friend.

A man who lived life to the full, who rejoiced in the love of his family and friends, and who bound all these things together with a strong determination to live a good life.

I would now invite you to spend a short while listening to some music, watching a photo montage, and reflecting with deep gratitude on Tim's life and on how it touched your own.

Live Reflection Music: "Time to Say Good bye", Francesco Sartori.
Played by Irene and Gupta Desilva

Slideshow

Reading

By Ian Denman, a poem chosen by Tim's daughter, Rachel

I wandered lonely as a cloud

*I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.*

*Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.*

The waves beside them danced; but they

*Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed---and gazed---but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:*

*For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.*

William Wordsworth

Celebrant

Thank you for your attendance today. That brings us to the close of this part of the service.

Music: “*With Cat Like Tread*” –from *Pirates of Penzance* by Gilbert and Sullivan performed by the D’Oyly Carte Opera Company

Gungahlin Cemetery

Graveside

The Committal

Please gather, as we respectfully take our farewell of Tim, grateful for the life which has been lived, and for all that life has meant to us.

Tenderly, lovingly, and reverently,
We commit the body of Timothy Roger Champion Curtin
To nature’s keeping.

We give thanks for his life,
We remember with gratitude his deep love for his family,
His generous heart.
May any regrets we feel today be turned into gratitude
For the time we shared with him.
And may the chill darkness of death give way
To the warmth and sunshine of his memory

That we will cherish forever.

May we leave this place in the quietness of Tim's memory,
Offering our love and support to one another.

Recessional

Music : Schubert songs