

A Eulogy for Bill Saunders (1920 – 2020) from Brian Saunders: 21/03/20

Creativity, hard work, moderation, humour and a love of sport

I am sorry that I cannot be at the planned Memorial for Bill and I know that you will also be feeling sad that the duly deserved celebration of my father's life cannot be held any time soon. I had decided to fly from the UK when it became clear that Dad was very soon to die. However, COVID-19 disrupted those plans as it has for many others. The following is based on my memories of Dad, which span the years from when he was 50 to 99. They also include some of the stories he told me from the war years.

Dad was very **creative**. During the war in New Guinea he found a simple way to create improvised shading for lights near an airstrip to make it less visible to enemy aircraft. He was not asked to do that but just thought it was important. He was awarded his corporal stripes for that, since it made everyone safer. When he built the house in 6 Neptune St, Mornington, he designed and installed extra wide eaves. They were the first example of this and attracted builders from miles around to view them. Recently, he was asked to open the new artificial bowling green at the Mornington Bowling Club. He went to the club a few days before so he could practise bowling (at 97). He discovered that he no longer had the strength to grip the bowl in one hand. Dad quickly realised he could use two hands to bowl it. He then had a wonderful time. He was photographed with the Mornington Mayor bowling on the green.

Dad always like to be doing something and was not afraid of **hard work**. In fact, I think he relished it as a younger man. He had very few days home sick when he worked as a builder. Indeed, if he was home in bed then there was clearly something very wrong with him. That hard work ethic served us all well because he kept on bringing in a salary which provided for his families for many years. I am very grateful that he enabled me to finish Year 12. I thanked him for that publicly at his 80th birthday and he was pleased.

Although Dad liked a beer, especially in his earlier years, he always knew not to have too much and too regularly. If he had been drinking too much he would then naturally cut back. That natural tendency for **moderation** is one of the reasons he lived to such an old age. "Doing everything in moderation is the key". He told me this a couple of years ago.

Dad had an excellent sense of **humour**. I never remember him laughing with my Mum because it was tense most of that time. But Carol says there were good years earlier when he and my Mum would laugh together – I am comforted by that. I do remember much laughter with Grace. Sadly, that came to an end as all good things must. In his final years after Grace had passed he told me that he did not have to "worry about anything". So, he had a nice care-free period at the end. He never minded laughing at himself. That is an important quality which we all enjoyed.

Dad had a keen **love of sport**: I have only very few memories of his tennis playing years (as I was very young then). But bowls is what I saw him do the most. In fact, I watched him win the Club Championship against Ray Glasser. That is one of the many entries of Dad on the bowling club boards. He was very competitive and hated losing (don't we all?). I think the competitive spirit that he had has served us all well.

In summary, I will always be grateful to my Dad for teaching me that:

- (A) There is always a way to be found to solve a problem.
- (B) Hard work pays off in the long run.
- (C) Don't overdo any one activity or indulgence.
- (D) Always be able to laugh at yourself.
- (E) Be physically active and push your body (but not to the point of damage)

Brian Saunders