



Rotary
Club of Strathfield



STRATHFIELD ROTARY SPECIAL BULLETIN

DISTRICT 9675
7th July 2021

www.strathfieldrotary.org.au

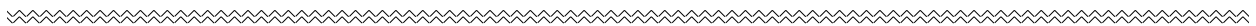
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Vale PP Peter Smith (PHF)



20 May 1943 - 2 July 2021



Last Memory of Peter Smith - **MY LASTING MEMORY**



Thaya Ponniah
President

It was on the 26th of June in the afternoon that I heard that there was going to be a lockdown in Sydney from 6pm. The first thing that crossed my mind was visiting Peter at Concord Hospital. As I was taking over as the president from the 1st of July, I needed his blessing. I also wanted to get his advice on a few things about our club for next year. I spent a lovely hour with Peter and his wife Marlene. The time with Peter has become a lasting memory for me. We discussed various things and I shared a few stories and incidents of how Peter inspired me with his dedication and passion for serving people. I mentioned to Peter that I have included him in my President's inauguration speech. Marlene also started relating a few stories from their early days in Orange in the late 60s. Peter was enjoying the conversation thoroughly; it was evident by his facial expressions. He was a man of few words. He was very humble and was shunning away the accolades when Marlene and I spoke about Peter and his service above self. I was very fortunate to have had that meeting with Peter – probably the last Rotary meeting Peter had. I received some golden nuggets from Peter, even though his health was deteriorating.

Peter Smith passed away on July 2, 2021 after more than 60 years of amazing humanitarian service. Today we, as Rotarians of the Rotary Club of Strathfield, along with Marlene, her family

and friends are getting ready to say goodbye to Peter and to celebrate his life; the life of one who has given so much to humanity, whom we love and appreciate. As the president of the Rotary Club of Strathfield I feel honoured to write this eulogy for our bulletin and dedicate this bulletin in honour of Peter Smith. I have been a Rotarian for a few years at Strathfield. There are many in our Club who know Peter better than I do and could tell us much more.

Peter was a man of deep conviction and passion. He believed there was good in everyone, and he was here to make the world a better place. He made a lasting impression in every place he served, starting from Orange, Strathfield and Inner West.

Rotary was a part of Peter's being. He believed, as our motto says, in "service above self". He was always thinking, "How can we help?". He believed that with a small group of committed individuals, mountains could be moved. He would say, "aren't we so lucky to have so many good people so we can help the people in need". He did not want a lot of committee meetings or processes, rather "our club could do this, let's do it". Peter had many ideas - every week there was a new idea. If the club did not pick up on his idea, you could be certain that in another week, he would be promoting the same idea until the need was met.

He wanted the family of Rotary Clubs working together, helping each other, taking on larger projects and having fellowship and fun together. Peter was everything to everyone. Whether it was Strathfield Council, schools in the

community, Salvation Army, Cancer Survivorship Centre at Concord Hospital, Red Cross or a Graffiti Removal Program – Peter was the champion for all. We Rotarians just follow his leadership. He was indispensable in our club. We will never find a replacement like Peter.

I can remember very well the last project we did together, with Peter taking the lead. Peter insisted that he had to lead two teams for the Annual Graffiti Removal Program a few months ago – although he was in the middle of his treatment. The program was organised by Peter including getting the volunteers, organising the materials and the equipment, and transporting people. We could clearly observe that Peter was not coping well physically. But his mental and emotional strengths were very high – there was no way for us to curtail him from any activities that day. It was unusual for him to have frequent rests, so we insisted that he should go home and rest, for us to continue - a definite no was his answer. Peter never had 'quitting' in his vocabulary.

His work with youth stands out in my mind. Peter was passionate about youth, passionate in giving youth a chance, even if that one person had gone astray. He believed that there was good in every young person and never gave up on them. His interest in youth spread to his volunteer roles at many schools, including Homebush Boys High School. Peter has formed Rotaract and Interact clubs and created many youth leaders. He also annually recognised young leaders through our Annual Youth Leadership Awards in conjunction with Strathfield Council.

I simply cannot believe that Peter is gone from our lives now - none of the

Strathfield's Rotarians can. There are only a handful of people who come into our world and touch our lives in a dramatic fashion. Peter was one such person. He was a great Rotarian and friend. He lit up every room he walked into with his generous spirit and good nature.

Rotary will miss Peter and will always remember his significant contributions. Peter ran a good race. He lived his dream of helping others. He has passed the baton on to us now. Let's cherish Peter's legacy and continue with his great work without losing the momentum he has built.

Rotarian Peter, we love you and we miss you more than words can ever express. You have graced our lives more than you will ever know. God bless you and take good care of you. We thank you Marlene, for sharing Peter with all of us for the benefit of humankind. Compassion, love, duty, reliability, honour, dignity, respect: these are all qualities that our Peter not only held in high esteem, but practiced every day during his time on this earth.

In honour and memory of our good friend and fellow Rotarian, Peter Smith, we thank God for the gift of friendship that binds us together as one. Grant, we pray, that the precious memories will support us all during this period of grieving. Peter, we hope to meet with you one day, in a better place.

"In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years".
Abraham Lincoln.

Thaya Ponniah



Reflections

Vale PP Peter Smith (PHF)

As advised by Rod McDougall on Friday 2-7-21, "It is with great sadness that I advise that our dear friend Peter Smith passed away today at Concord Hospital."

There are not enough superlatives to describe Peter. He gave so much of himself to so many people and to so many worthy causes. To illustrate, perhaps the tribute posted by Homebush Boys High on Facebook is most apt.

"An incredible man, family man, businessman, mayor, Rotarian and many other aspects that defined him. For those of us who had the pleasure of getting to know this magnificent man we would agree that certain traits come to mind when we described him. Kindness, humility, compassion, generosity, patience, determination, respectful, courteous, cooperative, initiative team player and resourcefulness are just a few that spring to mind.

The photos [shown on p5 and p6 – Ed] are a mere snapshot of his involvement, respect and care that he had for the HBHS community.

Today this wonderful man lost his battle to cancer and even during his biggest adversity he continued to attend Interact Meetings on a weekly basis, pick up and drop off the students to set up and pack up Concord Markets at ungodly hours, nothing was ever too much and always done with a smile on his face.

Peter had a great rapport with staff and other members of the community. To the students both past and present he was

definitely like their long lost grandfather and held in very high regard.

Heaven has definitely gained an angel and we will all miss him dearly.

We are indebted to him for his outstanding contribution, support and guidance!

We would like to extend our condolences to his family and loved ones. Our thoughts and prayers are with them.

*Rest In Peace Pete!
Your legacy will live on and your memory will be eternal!*

*Georgia Anton
Interact Coordinator"*

Members of the Rotary Club of Strathfield send our heart-felt condolences to Peter's wife Marlene and his family.





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TRIBUTE TO PETER SMITH





**A great man is one who
leaves others at a loss after
he is gone.**

Paul Valery