

Peter Dunn

Thank you, Lesia, for your assistance in constructing these words, and to Pete, for your predictably edifying and entertaining memoirs, which made me realise that even though you have been a great friend for so long, I never made enough of an effort to get to know you better. This could be a lesson for us all.

How fortunate we all are to have known Pete, who has been the consummate colleague, friend and family man, a man of integrity, with the intelligence, the common-sense, the witty sense of humour; the genuinely courageous person whose bravery we have admired, on whom we have relied for sound, solid and sensible advice, and who has always been the fount of all knowledge. When we have wanted to know anything, Pete has been the go-to person, the forefather to Google, Wikipedia, Yahoo and the rest of them. And the closer to midnight, and thus the further from first thing that morning, the more gregarious and profound he has always become; Trivial Pursuit: what a misnomer. Playing that game with Pete has never been a pursuit – much more a one-horse race, with the rest of us watching on from the grandstand as Pete triumphantly (but in his typically humble, and almost apologetic manner) marched around the board to victory.

Peter Anthony Dunn was born on April 2, 1949, in Holyhead Hospital, Anglesey, an island off Wales, the son of Patricia (nee Trevethan) and John Dunn. From all reports, his mother had a sharp brain, and his dad was a good all-round sportsman. Happily, Pete obviously picked up these positive attributes in great measure. John survived the entire Second World War in a tank regiment, serving in North Africa and Italy, and rising, we think, to the position of Tank Commander. Patricia served throughout the war in the ATS (the women's branch of the British Army), in communications. It is not surprising, therefore, that Pete should become the bold, community-minded person his friends and colleagues so admired. Pete was the eldest of four children. His brother Phil, who was two years younger, sadly and suddenly passed away in January this year, and just six weeks later, his youngest brother Andy, who was five years younger than Pete, finally lost his 8-year battle with cancer. The last four devastating months left the youngest, Mary, as the only surviving sibling. Despite all the overwhelmingly distressing news that Pete and Lesia received since July last year, they somehow found the fortitude to

continue to engage their friends with their love, good humour, kindness, warmth and genuine camaraderie.

As a young boy, Pete and his gang played soccer in the street, and on the sand of Crosby Beach, just a short walk from his home in Waterloo, Liverpool. By age 14, Pete had begun to develop into a very capable all-round athlete, competing for his school in track and field, as a hurdler, sprinter and long jumper, and for the first time in the "A" Rugby team. Similarly, he was developing into a more-than-adequate scholar, and was the academic top dog of Grade 9. Incredibly and **unfortunately**, osteomyelitis in his lower right shin, an infection of the bone, caused most likely in this case, by bacteria entering the knee gashed while playing football on the beach, resulted initially in a 6-week stay in hospital.

The infection did not heal, so another 2 weeks were spent in hospital. After 4 months on crutches, then a walking stick, the wound was re-opened during a game of hide-and-seek, resulting in a further 7 weeks in hospital. On his eventual return to school, 10 months after first visiting his family's doctor, complaining of the pain, Pete's rugby coach and teacher, Brother Mullowney suggested a trip to Lourdes in France to cure what he described as this now chronic medical condition. Pete's first trip out of England, financed by he knows not whom, resulted in his being dunked in the allegedly healing waters, and just as incredibly but this time **fortunately**, in the pain disappearing, and in his never having further problem with this condition.

The following year saw Pete discover his now legendary memory, and saw his Chemistry teacher, Brother Coleman, discover Pete's need for reading glasses. His father reckoned that this was caused by too much reading... Pete always disputed this, and went on to gain Grade One in all seven of his GCE subjects. The following summer, a 16-year old Pete and his friend Steve Luff took on jobs on the Cunard vessel, the Carinthia, for a return trip to Montreal as Toilet Cleaner and Engineer's Steward respectively. On returning to school at the end of that holiday, Pete was voted by his sixth form colleagues into the position of "Head Boy", or School Captain as we now know it, and in this final year at school excelled in all subjects, with Biology being his best. He was advised to consider applying for Oxford or

Cambridge, and on the advice of his Biology teacher, chose Queen's College, Oxford.

Outstanding results in Scholarship papers were rewarded in a Christmas Eve telegram from Queen's College, informing him that he was being offered the Browne Open Scholarship to study Natural Sciences.

Oxford was a whole new world for Pete, who had committed to studying Zoology. Academic work was nearly as important as Soccer, in which Queen's College played in 3rd Division. Promotion to 2nd Division in his second year, and appointment as Captain saw Soccer take on even more importance, and it was not from socializing that the extra time was allocated... Pete has always said that he devoted too much time at Oxford to football, but the old head/young shoulders paradigm obviously existed then, and still exists in tertiary institutions all over the world.

Nevertheless, he continued to do well in exams and practical work, and having completed his Masters' Degree, was awarded interviews, and subsequently offers to take on Ph.D studies at Cambridge, Southampton, Oxford, and the ANU. He decided that he needed to challenge himself in a new environment, away from the comfort zone that Oxford had become. What better way to achieve that than to travel half way around the world.

On his arrival in Australia, Pete was presented with a bountiful pile of academic papers, but was soon devastated to discover that his real interest, and his only reason for enlisting at the ANU, that being "Learning, Animal Behaviour and Memory", was not what his supervisor had in mind for him. So shattering was this news that he seriously considered returning home. We are all thankful that somehow, he was persuaded to find a topic to work on, within the range of the neurophysiological and neuroanatomical investigations that were already underway. Had he left, he would not have joined the ANU Soccer Club, would therefore never have become social secretary, and thus would never have been told to find some girls to brighten up a party for a group of visiting Kiwi University students. And, Mickey Freeman the team's fullback, would not have been able to send a young, single Lesia Komarowski, who worked directly under him, and who apparently had lots of girlfriends, to meet the social secretary, and Lesia, at the end of this first meeting, would not have been able to ask the social secretary, in

her characteristically direct and down-to-earth manner: “As a matter of interest, am I one of the girls, or am I going with **you**?”

How could Pete resist that? “I would be delighted if you would come with me” was his reply. As their relationship developed, Lesia spent long evenings after full days at work, typing up Pete’s handwritten drafts, and in November 1975 his thesis was submitted. Friends hastily arranged a celebratory Tequila Tour, and plans were hatched to travel to England together (Lesia had already planned to travel there alone), for Pete to undertake his Thesis Oral Review, as nobody in Australia was qualified to examine it. Over Christmas, Lesia happily accepted Pete’s Marriage proposal. They left Australia in March, and travelled to Russia as tourists, and to visit Lesia’s mother’s brother, who had not seen his sister since she was taken away in 1941. In the Northern summer of 1976, they bought a car and travelled through Europe together with their great friends Megan and Mark. They returned to Australia, were married in Queanbeyan on Saturday 29 January 1977. They immediately drove to Corio, and Pete began his teaching career three days later, on Tuesday 1 February, at Geelong Grammar School.

As a colleague, Pete was the master craftsman. His work in the classroom was a lesson to us all; his preparation was thorough, his outstanding knowledge of content enabled him to stretch all of his students, and his expectations of each of them were such that they produced performance above what they expected and what was expected of them by their parents and other teachers. He relished the challenge of extending them all, and they responded favourably as a result. It was clear that Pete had taught them what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. However, this was not spoon-feeding, which, in their ignorance, many would have hoped for upon entering his classroom for the first time. Pete taught them to learn, and to love the art of learning. His knowledge and his love of such intricate study as “The Electrophysiology and Anatomy of the Statocyst in Mud Crabs”, and his passion for generating inquiry in the minds of his students resulted in them inevitably becoming swept up in genuine academic rigour; a gift that they would carry with them throughout their own lives. I am not ashamed to admit that Pete’s impeccably professional approach was somewhat scary to me, who as a young Phys Ed Jock, had arrived at the school thinking that I was a pretty

competent educator; observing and admiring Pete's work from afar made me abundantly aware of just how far off the pace I really was, and it was inevitable that I, and many like me, would find ourselves attempting to follow Pete's lead in effective classroom teaching. The quality of his work was highly admired by members of the Science Department, many of whom engaged Pete in in-depth discussions, and who sought and appreciated his generous and always respectful mentoring.

Schools like Geelong Grammar School quite rightly expect, but do not always receive from their teaching staff, similarly high levels of aptitude and effectiveness outside the classroom. The sporting and activities programmes give students the opportunity to gain valuable breadth of experience in other elements of interest and expertise that teachers bring with them. Pete brought the same degrees of knowledge, organization, inquiry, passion and skill demonstrated in his classroom to the sporting field, where he excelled as a coach of students who were engaged in Soccer, Athletics and Tennis. As a voracious reader, he made sure that he was up-to-date with current trends in coaching, and he used his highly-developed analytical skills to initiate successfully in his coaching, effective variations that he believed were relevant and unique to the crop of sportsmen in his charge. It was no coincidence that, although significantly smaller in number than most opposition schools, Geelong Grammar School Soccer and Senior Boys' Sprint Relay teams coached by Pete were always highly competitive.

It is natural that one who excels so obviously in the grassroots of coaching should eventually find himself in charge of the entire programme. As the Head of Sport from 1997 to 2004, Pete threw himself headlong, but in a typically measured and considered manner, into the challenge of educating and imbuing coaches in the ideals of Sport in the APS system, and of instigating across the spectrum of sports, programmes that would achieve the objectives that such a comprehensive schedule demanded, and that would cater to the ever-changing needs of boys and girls throughout the School. His concern was constantly about appropriate involvement and positive outcomes for every boy and girl in every team, from the 1sts through to the least gifted and the most junior. Pete's absolute sporting passion was Soccer, the World Game that, however, did not exist in the rarefied atmosphere of Geelong Grammar School until,

against all odds, he introduced it in 1980. It was with such success that he did establish it in the programme that Soccer soon became the sporting department with the largest number of participants and teams. It took until 2003 before Soccer for girls was launched by the APS. Without Pete's drive, energy, enthusiasm and commitment, it probably would have taken until 2023.... How fitting it is that the School's Soccer Support Club has been named the "Doc" Dunn Support Club, and that Pete is the Patron; generations of soccer players, both girls and boys, their parents and coaches will always be reminded of the tireless and skilful work Pete did to introduce, take charge of, and Coach Soccer at the School.

As the GGS Delegate to the APS for eight years, and as Chair of the Delegates during the final two years, Pete was admired by his colleagues from all APS Schools for his determination to espouse and demand adherence to the principles of sportsmanship and respect for officials and opposition by all students and their parents; principles that had always underpinned this inter-school competition, but which sadly are often regarded as too difficult to maintain in a climate in which a blind eye is often turned to the behaviour of the few wayward parents. Pete never shied away from edifying overzealous students and their parents alike; he was well-placed to do so, as he himself set a flawless example by unflinchingly acting in a highly principled and professional manner.

Throughout Term 2 of 1978, the Headmaster, Charles Fisher was off campus, on sabbatical leave. After just one year and one term at Geelong Grammar School, Pete and Lesia's combined talents, their dependability and maturity convinced Mr Fisher to ask them to move into the Headmaster's then residence, which now forms the older section of Garnett House, to look after for the term, the twelve senior girls and boys who lived upstairs there as weekly boarders. This was the beginning of their highly successful careers in the area of pastoral care. In 1983, Peter was appointed Acting Head of Fraser House. This appointment was followed in 1984 by nine years as Head of Manifold House. Undertaking the task of truly effective running of a Senior Boys' Boarding House with three daughters under the age of four required an enormous husband/wife effort. In fact, when they moved into Manifold, Laura was 3, Nic 2, and Susi minus 3 weeks.... None of us was other than supremely

confident that Lesia and Pete would succeed. Of course, we were not disappointed.

At the cornerstone of Pete's approach to house mastering was his customary belief in, and scrupulous honesty with the students in his care, and with their parents. When boys did well, they were made aware, when they messed up they were informed and tutored, and were left in no illusion as to what was expected of them. No school can do all things for every student in it. Pete strongly maintained his commitment to the notion that if a student was better suited to Ag College or to training in the Trades than pursuing the rigorous intellectual demands of mainstream academic education, he and his parents needed to be advised of this; if that meant that the family decided to follow that advice, and that the student left before the end of Year 12, then Pete fully supported them. The students' wellbeing always came first, even in the face of reproach from senior administration. Walking into Manifold was always a pleasure; the mutual respect that Pete and Lesia, and their staff had developed with the boys was palpable, and the boys greeted visitors, particularly adult visitors, in a manner that strongly reflected that. It was a very happy home away from home. Pete initiated a number of modifications to, and a blueprint for, the running of a boarding house, and many of these were adopted in other Houses, and are still evident today. Amongst these were End of Year House Dinners for the boys and their parents, and drinks after Parent/Teacher evenings (no doubt, decidedly well-needed by some parents after a torrid series of interviews).

Bringing up three daughters is no easy task, even without 75 adolescent boys to look after, and what brilliant parents Lesia and Pete have been. Listening to Pete giving his speech at each of his daughters' weddings has been a delight; he conveyed relevant and important messages, incorporating his characteristic humour, and his pride in them, in what they have achieved and continue to achieve, and his love and respect for who they are as people, have always been obvious. It is unquestionable that they have brought three fine men in Alex, Phil and Dave, into their family. Laura, Nic and Susi are outstanding human beings, and like their parents have always been committed, devoted and authentic friends, and immense and gifted contributors to the community, wherever they have lived.

Small wonder that we are so fortunate to know them, and their mother Lesia, and to have known their outstanding father. A man of courage, commitment and integrity, Pete, wherever you are, whilst you will not physically be here, your influence will travel with us, wherever we go, and we will always be better people for having known you, for having learnt from you, and for having been privileged to call you our friend.