



EULOGY

David Asimus, AO

by Mr Ian Sully

I now know what a journalist goes through when he has collected a mountain of material for a story only to be told by his publisher that he has to drastically cut it. I have been furnished with many comical stories from others and of my own which I regretfully can't share with you in the time allowed.

I heard David introduced once by Wagga's great raconteur as "the little Aussie battler". Nothing could be further from the truth because he was large in stature and large in life. He excelled in his achievements and now when I look around at this sizeable gathering to celebrate his life, it is recognition of the impact he has had in the commercial, academic, rural and charitable areas, together with his many, many friends.

David attended Barker College in Sydney where he was Head Prefect and Captain of the 1st X1 during his final year in 1960. He then entered St Paul's College at Sydney University, where he was Head Student, gained a Blue for rowing and graduated with a Bachelor of Economics.

David came from the property Mt Horeb, near Adelong, and although spending a lot of his time involved in his many roles never changed from being David Asimus, our good old friend.

In casting my mind back over the last 50 odd years of our friendship, the driving force in David's life was his competitive nature together of course with his soft centre. When those of you who have been fortunate enough to know him, will have recognised that there was nothing he enjoyed more than a challenge. After having just listened to Ian's resume of his illustrious career, David was successful in achieving a most satisfactory outcome to those challenges. As far as his sporting competitiveness we can certainly vouch for the intensity to which he applied himself and especially to his great passion for golf. This competitiveness was also evident at social occasions when he enjoyed attending dinner parties. A dinner party without robust conversation was most unsatisfactory for David and he quickly had to rectify things by introducing highly contentious issues to really fire things up. It was only a few days ago in the Sydney Morning Herald that he was described as "the pot stirrer" for Rural Press, a talent I feel sure was honed by his friends and was used to great effect in later life. We have a daughter, Amanda, who is an ardent greeny and is ready to passionately defend any issues she believes in. David having known her since birth also knew he had the perfect victim and while she was attending Sydney University we had a family dinner where he stated that the Rhodes Scholarship should never be awarded to a female. This naturally inflamed Amanda and produced the perfect result. Pure Asimus stirring. David stimulated discussion and admired those who stood up to him during such "pot stirring". That's what he enjoyed.

A further example of this was an episode at dinner in Narooma where the topic under discussion was the analogy between Lloyd Webber and Mozart. David interjected saying he didn't agree, he thought Lloyd Webber's compositions were all too similar and reeled off a number of examples but included Les Miserables. This was questioned as being incorrect but David was adamant and willing to place a wager on the outcome. The following day both combatants in the wager did some homework. That night after dinner he visited this opponent and in front of dinner guests, crawled into the room on all fours to kiss her foot. This was a measure of the man, generous in defeat with a great sense of humour.

David had a desire to play as large a role as possible towards the benefit of others and in particular young students. In private conversation he would tell me of the deep satisfaction it gave him to be associated with

organisations such as the Nuffield Fellowship and the Chancellorship together with other charitable activities so that young deserving people were given the opportunity to fulfil their ambitions.

David married Miss Jane Archer in 1960. An ex Frensham girl who had been sports captain, earning her position with the highest accolades in several sports that the school has to award, namely, four irises. Jane was a wonderful partner for David, in that when he was fully involved in his commercial activities away from Wagga, she held the fort. An example of which, when they decided to sell the property near Adelong and purchase land close to the Wagga airport, "Alabama" at Ladysmith proved the ideal site and it fell to Jane to negotiate the purchase of the property. Jane was also very supportive of David during the many overseas trips they had to make during that period as well as the entertaining required by the Wool Corporation at their Melbourne home. The grand occasion at the Sydney Opera House for the Wool Corporation comes to mind.

Any discussion on the life of the Asimus' would be incomplete without some time spent in reference to the game he loved – golf. Why, even returning from their honeymoon David and Jane embarked on one of the most precarious forms of golf competition, a mixed foursome championship which for those who know and understand is one of the most effective ways of destroying a relationship that I know of. Very Brave. Although it did briefly lead to harsh words, all ended well. I only wish I had time to recount the full story.

I am confident when I say there was no activity for David which held such enjoyment as those days when he was golfing with his friends. It was really through gold that we introduced David and Jane to Narooma in the early 70's and I don't think they have missed one Narooma summer holiday since then. Arrangements had been finalised for this years Narooma holiday and at the very moment we should all be hitting off from the first tee at Narooma. A group that is special, as we have been together for the last 30 odd years. Each day, on our way to the tee there would be heavy negotiation on daily handicap revision and the balls bet for the days round. This of course gave David the full opportunity for sledging to which we naturally retaliated to in full and David's penchant for gambling came to the fore. He was the one who would take golf ball bets of any number from anyone. The actual hitting off by we mere mortals hardly caused a stir amongst the assembled crowd but when the big fella took to the tee there was an expectant hush as people knew that some sort of notable seismic event was about to ensue. David's drive usually disappeared into the

distance down the fairway 30-40 meters beyond our drives. However, as David always did things in a grand fashion, it not always went down the fairway but was sometimes seen going over houses on the left of the fairway, still going up and falling to earth we know not where.

We always knew how David was playing by observing from afar the manner of his gait and the set of his shoulders portrayed the state of his play. Was our bet looking safe or were we going to loose balls?

These were particularly happy times for David, he thrived on it, and always appeared the next day for golf in the most optimistic mood, relishing the camaraderie and competitiveness with all thoughts of the outside world thrust to the back of his mind.

Naturally these golf matches were not confined to Narooma and there were also many occasions for golf in Melbourne and various other courses. In fact, the last time I saw David was when we said goodbye at Melbourne Airport in December after a golfing trip to Tasmania.

Those of you who knew David would have known he had great integrity and sensitivity when dealing with any sadness in others. Always ready to help and support. He was a Big Man with a big heart. He lived his life with Gusto and a zest for life, making every minute count. He was able to separate his business life from his personal life always returning to family and friends as if there was no interlude. An example of this, after returning from a board meeting in Perth to Narooma it was only minutes before the collar and time would be exchanged for shorts and a fishing rod and he would be skipping over the rocks at the bar to see what he could catch for dinner. The skipping slowed in later years as did the fishing when it became to dangerous but other interests took its place.

We all regret you leaving us at 78 old boy but I know that if it had to happen it was the perfect way for you to go.

Your timing just left a bit to be desired.

Ian Sully
4 February 2008