

Eulogy Of John McKinnon (Jack) Grant

(Presented On Friday 11th June 2010)

Jack was born on 1st April 1919 at Carlton. His younger brother Alan died in early childhood.

Jack lived his early life in Carlton. Later he moved to Preston, where he attended Tyler Street state school. His father Edward died in March 1935 when Jack was 15 years of age. Jack and his mother Annie then moved to the McKinnon family home in Port Melbourne where he grew up with his grandmother, aunts, uncles and cousins. These friendships endured.

Living in a seaside suburb Jack became a proficient swimmer and achieved his bronze medallion. As a young man he also played cricket with a local church team. Later he played football with Raymond's football club and after marrying played pennant tennis for the local Reservoir tennis club.

Jack's work career started delivering newspapers as a young boy. He started working as a young man as a wood machinist at Raymonds. He later went to work for Dunlop's Tyre factory in Montague where he worked until 61 years of age when he retired.

Jack did not have the benefit of an extensive education having to leave school after year 8, but he was an intelligent man. His stylish handwriting was the envy of many people.

As a young 17 year old Jack met Mona in their local suburb of Port Melbourne. After a courtship of some years they married at St Joseph's Port Melbourne, where Jack's uncle Les McKinnon acted as best man. They had their wedding reception at the local Town Hall. Grandma McKinnon provided ice-cream which was a rare treat in those days. A number of Jack's mates provided beer to add to the celebration. ...and this was a union which was to last for 62 years.

After their marriage they boarded in Brunswick where Vivian was born. They moved to Clifton Hill to live with Jack's aunt and Karen was born there. In August 1946 they moved to Reservoir where Colin, Yvonne, Lesley, Brian and Marita were born. Jack was active in the Reservoir Progress Association.

Jack loved his large family and was proud of their achievements. Although in those early days Jack wasn't a Catholic he supported Mona to ensure each child was given a Catholic education. In practical terms

Jack did more than his fair share of chauffeuring the local nuns and cleaning the school buildings in Reservoir.

Jack and Mona spent many happy years at Reservoir and made strong friendships that were lasting. Many happy times were spent with Les and Nin, Jack and May, Arthur and Marge in addition to many other neighbours.

The family home was often filled with relatives. Jack's mother Annie visited Thursday nights, Aunty Lillie on Friday nights and Mona's mum Alice was a regular Wednesday visitor. This love of family that Jack had has carried over into his children's lives.

Regular Sunday visits were made visiting Jack's family in Port Melbourne. These were great times with the McKinnon family. These visits often included dropping in on Mona's aunt Dorrie, Maree and her children. Jack was a proud father who ensured his children bonded with their extended family. The children looked forward to these Port Melbourne visits particularly with the enticement that dad would stop at the chocolate shop in Bay Street, Port Melbourne ...of course being a Sunday the chocolate shop was never open. ...this was part of Jack's humour!!

These early years saw many family celebrations, great parties and best of all the annual Dunlop's picnic, which the children all looked forward to. Picnics were great occasions to catch up with all the family.

There were also wonderful holidays at Noojee in the early days and later on wonderful camping holidays at Rosebud. Jack went to great efforts taking the camping gear down the week prior and setting up tent for his large family.

The family outgrew their Reservoir home especially when Jack's aunty Bella came to live and in 1973 moved to Diane Crescent, Croydon, where Jack's special grandchild John was born in 1974.

In the mid 70's Jack made the decision to join Mona in her faith and become a Catholic. He was baptized at Whitefriar's Monastery in Donvale where the family celebrated with him.

Upon retirement he played an active role in the church at Mooroolbark taking on jobs such as mowing the convent lawns, assisting Mona with the church cleaning as well as chauffeuring her to the many church activities she was involved in. He also became a member of the church Rosary group with Mona.

In these later retirement years camping holidays were replaced by more adventurous journeys to interstate destinations such as Brisbane and Port Macquarie. Jack and Mona also celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary with a three week holiday in New Zealand.

Jack and Mona established new friendships with Croydon neighbours especially Suzanne and Trevor. They also developed new friendships within the Mooroolbark parish as well as maintaining the old. There were many occasions when old friends from Reservoir would visit for Sunday lunches, share a good laugh and remember happy times. Jack also kept in contact friendships with workmates from Dunlop's.

He enjoyed the Mooney Valley races and the Showground trots and continued to place a bet up until a couple of weeks ago.

When Mona passed away Jack picked up where Mona left off. ...becoming the family social director, organizing get-togethers at the Doncaster and Old England hotels for family birthday celebrations.

Although Jack missed Mona he continued to enjoy life keeping in touch with what was happening in everyone's lives. He continued to gain great enjoyment from his many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Jack enjoyed simple pleasures in life; having a bet, watching his favourite TV shows, reading and as his mobility lessened he developed a love of watching an ever increasing library of DVDs.

Jack became a great organizer and delegator – having a large family was definitely a benefit. He assigned specific tasks to each of his children who enjoyed looking after their dad and spending precious time with him. Jack had no favourites but he did have a special place in his heart for Marita, and her brothers and sisters appreciate the care she's always given to her dad, especially in the past few months.

Jack was a generous man and whilst money may have been tight he was always giving of his time and energy to anyone he could assist. He felt for those in poorer circumstances, especially those caught up in the inhumanities of war.

Jack always had a greeting - even for a stranger, and always said 'it costs nothing to say hello'. All who met Jack could not help but love him and each who has, is richer for having known him.

May Jack rest in peace.