



Vale

Graham William Forsyth

6th December 1946 - 24th October 2015

The funeral service for Graham William Forsyth, aka 'Force' was conducted on Wednesday, 28th October with Reverend David Fell officiating.

In his welcoming remarks Rev. said "on behalf of Mari, Daniel, Kahn and family, it's my privilege to welcome you to the graveside service for Graham William Forsyth. My name is Rev. David Fell, and it's a great honour for me to be here this afternoon to officiate at the funeral of such a well-liked and respected gentleman.

I know that today is a sad day, but I hope at the end of this service, that you will feel glad you took

the opportunity to do some of your grieving in the presence of others who have known and loved him. I'd also like to take this opportunity to invite you to a wake to be held at the Norfolk Island Bowling Club.

At this time our thoughts also go out to Graham's family who have unselfishly devoted themselves to supporting him through his illness, and also in turn the dear friends who have supported them.

Graham had some very specific wishes regarding the proceedings here this afternoon, particularly in terms of some of the music to be played; I hope his family will gain some form of comfort from knowing they were able to carry them out, as I'm sure Graham gained comfort from knowing that they would."

The hymn "In the Sweet Bye and Bye" led by Trent Christian was then sung and the following Eulogy, prepared by Mari was read by Mike King.

"Force was the stuff of Banjo Patterson poetry; a quiet conservative Aussie character who liked a punt on the horses, who rolled his own durries, who liked a cold beer on a hot day and who stayed true to his favourite football club; and who when faced with a dilemma simply shrugged his shoulders and grunted like the man from ironbark.

Sure he had opinions, but he rarely expressed them loudly or got into prolonged arguments.

Those who knew Force for a long time know that this was the Graham Forsyth who came to the island in 1970 and who remained the same unobtrusive and private character for 45 years; laconic and dry humoured. Local politics didn't interest him greatly and he rarely commented on what was going on, but it worried him that politics could be so divisive in the island

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Graham William Forsyth - continued

Graham was born in Sydney on 6th December 1946, the second of two children to Bill and Dinah Forsyth. He was going on 24 when he chose between a promising career in rugby league, having played grade football for the Balmain Tigers and coming to live and work on Norfolk. He had visited earlier with his Dad to suss the place out and fell in love with Norfolk Island. The rest is history as he would say, and with his Mum and Dad, came to live and work the bakery in Burglar's Lane starting up on 1st April 1970. He and Bill were both qualified bakers. If anything was to go wrong with the Bakery in subsequent years he was quick to explain that, well they did start in the bakery on April Fools Day!

It burnt down during their first year here but they rebuilt and carried on.

We know how hard the Forsyths worked in the bakery and how generous they were with their time in delivering to the community at countless weddings and Bounty Days, feasts of pies, bread, chickens and pork. How welcome were those fresh meat pies at the end of a long night out partying, when we were on the way home and Force was just starting work?

During those early years in the bakery Graham was lucky to secure the services of a couple of young local lads. First young Tim Sheridan then young Sam some 4 years or so later. I think that it's fair to say that Graham became a kind of father figure to the Sheridan boys and a lasting bond was formed, particularly with Tim who resumed a close friendship with Graham after he completed his naval career. Tim and Sam joked that Force lead them into delinquency, teaching them to drink and smoke.

Over time Graham tired of the long irregular hours and the hard work of a wood-fired bakery and was keen to be out of the industry with its long irregular and hard hours. He lasted some 25 years in the bakery industry then moved into landscaping and general garden maintenance working for himself. In 2004 he secured similar work with the island administration, a job that, by and large he held until he went on sick leave last year. He had spent his final working years as grounds man at the central school where he was happy and proud of his work. Both the teachers and the school children warmed to him and called him 'Pa'.

Graham met Marie Lorraine McCoy in those early years. They married at Branka House out Longridge in 1974 and within a few years the marriage produced two boys Daniel and Khan who were to ensure that the Forsyth name lived on after he was gone. Marie and Graham were survivors in the marriage stakes, together for 41 years. Sure dem two se growl from

time to time as happens in all modern marriages do, but if you saw what I saw these past several months, the care and attention, the love, the mopping of the brow, getting Force's medicine, well dem two strong as owa at the end. Mirra reminded me just recently about the 18 months they had away travelling and working together in the Northern Territory about 18 years ago and she felt that the closeness to Graham over past months reminded her of those times.

Force was an accomplished sportsman even though his bakery work didn't exactly fit the requirements of training and game times. Mirra reminded me the other day that Force was quite a swimmer in his early years, an ability that he passed on to his children and grandchildren. He succeeded in cricket and in bowls representing Norfolk and achievements in various local titles over some 30 years. He played local football (league) with the Longridge club, the Blues.

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Graham William Forsyth - continued

He was a strong-minded and a physically strong man his entire life and it showed in his sporting endeavours as much as in the strength of his fight in recent months and his stubborn refusal to give in to the finality of his illness. During the 12 months of his illness he was determined to hold on to components of his life as long as possible. He spent only 2 weeks in the local hospital, he went to the bowlo for a drink as long as he was able, kept on driving until he told Mirra that his legs were giving up the ghost. He relived the good times. We spoke about his Las Vegas trip about 8 years ago with 3 of his mates and agreed once again that it had been a wonderful happy experience. Many have travelled with Force on various trips, bowls or recreational, and know that he was the most agreeable 'no fuss' travelling companion that anyone would want to have. Nothing was a bother.

He leaves behind a lot of mates and a big and loving family.

He is survived by wife Marie and their children Khan and Daniel, Danny's wife Monica who just loved to have a Port Royal rollie and chat with Force; his step-sons James and Tony. And together Force's wide blended family of Whitney, Lucien, Jeannie, Siarne, Kristian, Declan Alex and Hannah, James, Ruby and Tilly, all of whom called him 'Pa'; Suze and Hailey, former daughters-in-law who remained very close to Force, and Ellis and Tenille McCoy to whom Force was also 'Pa', and their mother Lizzie who played a special exceptional and selfless role in Force's care over the past 12 months, accompanying him for treatment over extended periods at great personal sacrifice. Graham was so extremely grateful to Lizzie, for Lizzie, for her special kindness and companionship right down to getting him to the Royal Randwick for a couple of beers and a few bets in between treatments. Lizzie has lost her father figure.

Force's parents Bill and Dinah predeceased him. His sister Pamela survives him.

The family would like also to express a huge thank you to the doctors and nursing staff for their wonderful care, attention and love that was shown to Graham during his illness and especially over the last few weeks. And to all Graham and Marie's friends who visited Force and who continue to provide love and comfort; to the wreath makers, the sextant, those who prepared the grave and all who attend here today, a big thank you. And of course the Reverend Fell for conducting the service."

While family and friends placed their floral tributes a recording of one of Graham's favourite artists Bob Seger was played and this was followed by The Lord's Prayer.

There then followed the Committal and in his closing remarks Reverend David Fell said - "When you leave here in a short while, I hope, that like me, you will leave with a feeling of having shared in something special, for a very special man. I know Graham would be very proud to see how his family is supporting each other at this very difficult time.

I mentioned earlier that Graham had some very specific wishes regarding the proceedings here this

afternoon; I hope his family will gain some form of comfort from knowing they were able to carry them out, as I'm sure Graham gained comfort from knowing that they would.

We'll finish this afternoon, not with the usual hymn, but to the tune of The High Way Man by the Highway Men. I hope that when you hear this piece of music at any time in the future that you will be reminded of Graham and smile."

In the conclusion of the service, Mike quoted the following lines from Banjo Patterson's poem "The Daylight is Dying" -

*The daylight is dying
Away in the west.
The wild birds are flying
In silence to rest;
In leafage and frondage
Where shadows are deep,
They pass to its bondage -
The kingdom of sleep.
And watched in their sleeping
By stars in the height,
They rest in your keeping,
Oh, wonderful night.*

Thank You

Graham's family would like to thank everyone for their love and support during his passing. A huge thank you to the doctors and nurses, and staff at the Norfolk Island Hospital for the wonderful care during Graham's time there.

Also a special thank you to the children of NICS for the wonderful guard of honour.

In Memorium

Timmy Lloyd, who quietly 'stole away to Jesus' on Sunday, 30th October 2005.

Life is a mixture of sunshine and rain,
Tear drops and laughter, pleasure and pain -
We can't have all bright days,
but it is certainly true
There was never a cloud that
The Sun didn't shine through!

Remembered with love by Tom, Valerie, Douglas and families and her many friends.

Aunty Tim

30th October 2015

Loved and always missed.

Jonno, Jo, Croyden and Timi
