

Eric Seeley
31/7/1927 - 28/2/2018

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ENTRY Music: *Blackbird* – The Beatles

Ladies and Gentlemen if you are able, please stand.

Staff as pallbearers and family following escort Eric into the chapel.

WELCOME and INTRODUCTION

Please be seated.

Good afternoon my name is Beth Stone and on behalf of the family, I welcome you all here today for this funeral service to say farewell to Eric Seeley. It is my privilege to be your celebrant today.

The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss and have found their way out of the depths. These people have an appreciation, a sensitivity and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness and a deep loving concern. Eric was a genuinely nice man, a beautiful person!

Eric was proud and independent, an honest man, a caring man who lived a life rich in love, respect, family values and compassion.

He touched each of your lives differently. He was devoted to his wife and family. Family always came first. Throughout his life, Eric connected to each of you in a unique way that only you will know and understand. The relationship you had with Eric touched your life and genuinely affected you in a very personal way.

The moments you spent together may have been fleeting but the permanence of Eric's life lies in your memories and any influence he has left behind.

The influence he had on you; was it that as a family man and friend, was it that he provided the things that made your life what it was, that he strived hard from day to day, that he taught you how to live, how to love and how to create family memories? Was he an essential part of your world because he helped to show you the way by providing strength, love and support?

INTRODUCTION TO THE EULOGY

Just as your memories may be different, so it is important to realise that your grief is different and unique to you. No one will grieve in exactly the same way. Your experience will be influenced by a variety of factors; the relationship you had with Eric, the circumstances surrounding his life and death, your emotional support system and your cultural and religious background.

With this in mind, Garry and Pam would like you to share the family's memories through the eulogy they have written and Garry will share it with you.

EULOGY

Eric Herbert Seeley

1927 - 2018

Eric was born on 31st July 1927 in Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire, a redhead, the first child of Herbert (always known as Nav) and Veronica and from all accounts he had a happy and carefree childhood - climbing trees, making cubbies in Acky's Warren, getting into scrapes and generally being a lad.

He was always a protective older brother to Brenda and Don and they all attended the Doncaster Road School. He left there on his 14th birthday with a good reference and a job waiting for him in the warehouse of the co-op pharmacy.

After only a few months he started work at the Appleby Frodingham Steel Works as a junior clerk, his first job was to deliver the internal mail and he would always stop in at each department and learn about what they were doing. In 1943 he began an apprenticeship as a plater there at the steel works.

In November 1945, at the age of 18, he left to do his National Service and joined the 2nd Battalion of the Essex Regiment. It was here that he first showed his true colours as a leader rising to become one of the youngest sergeants in the regiment.

In the aftermath of the war he was stationed in France guarding trains containing returning POWs and then Italy where he was involved with guarding German war criminals at the war courts.

He returned to Scunthorpe to complete his apprenticeship in May 1948 remaining at the steelworks and rising to the position of foreman before leaving in 1966 to bring the family to Perth.

He was introduced to Evelyn, the love of his life, at the Doncaster Road corner, not long after returning from his National Service and they married on March 10th 1951 in a double wedding with Evelyn's twin sister Aleen and her husband Jack.

The young couple bought a brand new home in Baysdale Road, Ashby and it wasn't long before they were blessed with the arrival of their little girl Pamela in 1953, the apple of her dad's eye. Four years later Garry arrived to complete their family unit.

The family always made the most of every opportunity for enjoyment and fun, joining Evelyn's sister and her family for Christmases and summer holidays. Most summers Eric would bundle Evelyn, Pamela and Garry into the car and, come rain or shine, ensure that they had a wonderful summer holiday. Sometimes they only went an hour away to Cleethorpes or Skegness but several years saw them make the long trek to the south coast of England to stay in the iconic small hotels along the seafront in Bournemouth or Paignton.

In 1963 Eric and the family moved to another new home in Yaddlethorpe and it was there a couple of years later that he made the decision to move his young family thousands of miles across the world for a better life. Eric and Evelyn never regretted that decision and when asked recently why he made the move he said that it was because he knew there was some place better to bring up a family than a grey steelworks town.

Within 2 days of arriving in Perth in September 1966, Eric had found work and settled his family into a new way of living. He adapted amazingly well to his new life, taking to the outdoor lifestyle with enthusiasm and energy - camping, fishing, prawning and crabbing as often as he could.

With Evelyn he bought a new home in Morley where he loved creating a lush garden, always with lots of colour, he built a patio, then an aviary and eventually built a swimming pool, doing much of the work himself.

Over the next few years most of the family followed him to Perth including his parents and his sister Brenda with her family. Eric and Evelyn made a few close friends and began the famous camping trips on long weekends, they spent as much time as possible out doing things that they'd never been able to do before.

Grandchildren began to arrive - all girls, 2 redheads, like himself and 2 blondes, and he absolutely doted on those girls. He was always extremely proud of everything they did in life and to the end he loved to hear about everything they were doing and where they were going. He would always welcome their friends, the school friends, the boyfriends that came and went and those that became permanent members of the family. Those friends have very fond memories of him and of Evelyn from many years ago.

There was a glitch though mid-way through this long and happy life. At the age of 49 Eric contracted stomach cancer, the doctors weren't hopeful, it was rare to overcome this form of the disease, but Eric had no intention of giving in to it. After having a major operation to remove part of his stomach and part of his oesophagus, Eric grabbed on to the life he loved and pulled through to rejoin his family and outlive many of his contemporaries, making it to a fabulous 90 years young.

Eric returned to work for a few years and then retired at the age of 60 to spend the next 20 years thoroughly enjoying life with Evelyn. They moved to Mandurah, went fishing, crabbing and prawning alongside Aleen and her husband Jack. They travelled interstate and overseas, visiting Garry and his family in Sri Lanka and Pam and her family in England for extended holidays. They eventually moved back to Perth in 1999, to the northern suburbs, to once again be closer to family.

Sadly, Evelyn passed away in September 2006 leaving a huge hole in his life and his heart. They had been married for 56 years and were still as in much in love then as they were when they married.

Eric continued to live in their home in Kinross, he still travelled occasionally, taking a cruise to Singapore and a trip to Melbourne with Pamela and visiting Garry and his family in the south of the state. He lived a quiet life, reading extensively for as long as he could, going out for coffee or a pint at his favourite pub and taking an interest in current affairs.

The family were his lifeline, his love, he would attend every football match that his great grandson played in, every dance concert, every graduation, every family occasion. He would travel to Melbourne for a visit when a granddaughter and great granddaughter moved there and he wouldn't miss out on anyone's birthday. He was thrilled with every young life that was added to the family and his smile was the brightest when he held our latest addition, two year old Bodhi, on his 90th birthday.

He was extremely proud of every member of his family, his children, his granddaughters, his great grandchildren and those that became new members of the family.

Eric was a proud and independent man, loved by everyone who knew him. He continued to drive until 6 months ago. He lived in his own home. He did his own shopping, cooking and looked after himself for as long as he could.

Eric passed away quietly and peacefully on the 28th February at Joondalup hospital. He is greatly missed.

TRIBUTES

From Garry:

Some of my best memories of my Dad are from the first years after we arrived in Perth.

Those years were full of excitement and discovery for Dad. It was like he, along with us kids were experiencing the world for the first time. He loved Australia. The warmth, the blue skies, and the long golden beaches.

Not long after we arrived Dad had established a garden. He grew peaches, plums, and grapes, along with roses and carnellias. Dad was very proud of his garden and being able to grow the things that would have been impossible to grow in bleak and grey Scunthorpe.

After a while Dad started to explore the great outdoors. It started one summer when Dad, Mum, Pam and myself would head to the river at Guildford. After a swim and a picnic dinner, we would throw a line in. We would even catch a few tiddlers. But the biggest thing that was caught was Dad; Hook. Line. And sinker. His fishing exploits

are now legend. In the many years that followed he would stand for hours, and hours, and hours on the beach with his fishing rod and Tilly lamp. Mum too was an avid fisher and would always be there on the beach beside him.

After discovering the best fishing spots around Perth it was time to explore further. Camping was his next great adventure. First just a tent. Then a camper trailer on the back of the car and a boat on the roof. The old car would be packed tight and dragging on the ground as we headed off every chance we had for a family fishing holiday to Greenough or Kalbarri, or to Augusta a favourite place.

Fishing also led to crabbing and prawning. Dad always encouraged the whole family to join him in these activities. His passion continued to the end and he has taught all his grand kids how to bail a hook, cast a rod and snag a fish.

Dad was a keen swimmer too. In our early years in Perth, Dad would load us in the car for an outing to Mullaloo beach. Often accompanied by aunts, uncles, cousins and grand parents. It would be a family event. If we ever lost sight of Dad while we were jumping around in the surf we would look out past the breakers and there we would see Dad with his distinctive freestyle stroke heading off into the deep blue.

Mum used to worry that he would be out there when the shark siren sounded and he wouldn't hear it. I recall an occasion when Dad was swimming way out, and the siren did sound. While all of us who were splashing around in the surf were trying to decide whether to head back to shore or wait for the next wave to take us in, Dad struck out with a few powerful strokes. He caught the biggest wave of the day and rode it all the way to the beach. He was standing there waiting for us when we finally struggled in.

That's how I like to remember my Dad. He achieved great things with the minimum of fuss.

Pam's tribute:

Dear dad

I blame you you know, I blame you for it all. I blame you for my inability to stay in one place, for my lack of money because it's all been spent on travel. I blame you for my inquisitive nature, my thirst for knowledge and my determination to do and see all I can in this world.

I blame you for setting me off on this life of adventure and discovery.

I blame you for it all, but at the same time I thank you. From the bottom of my heart. I thank you for being my rock, my anchor and the constant in my life, for never doubting me or questioning my decisions. I thank you for being there in my life, for making me understand the value of family and of loving unconditionally.

I thank you for not judging, when you so easily could have, for accepting that I needed to learn my own lessons, that I needed to travel my own path and that I needed to explore and test my boundaries, just as you had.

I thank you for being you and for being my dad.

And now a tribute from Rachel and Angela. Please come forward.

We wanted to share a few words today in memory of grandad, starting with how incredibly lucky we were to be granddaughters of Eric Seeley. And I'm sure Kathy and Nikki feel the same.

When Angela and I were young, there was something really magical about visiting Nanna and Grandad in Mandurah. It was as if that long drive from Mt Helena took us to a whole other world.

It was a place where we could swim in the backyard pool all day, and stay up late at night by the river. Despite how small it might seem now as adults, that bridge in Mandurah – a where we spent so many afternoons wandering by the river and nights fishing – it was a huge and exciting place to explore when we were young, and the memories we created there over the years are deeply treasured.

To us, Grandad was the best fisherman around, whether he was dropping a line off the bridge, casting into the ocean, or getting us to shine a torch on the prawns from the bank. Bundled up in jumpers and sneaking lollies from Nanna's pockets, it was such a thrill to see Grandad reel a catch in, or to have him place our small hands correctly as he taught us how to cast off.

Things changed as we got older of course, they always do. There was less fishing, and more having beers at the pub.

But even when we didn't get to see him as often, we knew grandad was always proud of us – of all his granddaughters, and later his great grandchildren. He'd

marvel at the stories we told, be impressed at our achievements, and always, always be rooting for us.

There are so many ways we will remember grandad:

For his love of travel and adventure, and the postcards sent from all around the world

How he'd have an ice cream cone waiting for us as we walked through the door after the long drive to Mandurah

The way he manned the BBQ at family events with a beer in hand, and napped on the couch after Christmas dinners

Helping dad paint the house in Mt Helena and spending hours in the garden and greenhouse

Making Nanna a cup of tea to drink in bed and then walking to the shops to buy her lotto ticket

Teaching us how to duck-dive in their swimming pool – and beating us at swimming races

Marvelling at how strong he was when he held up his hands for us to practise punching

Continuing to rough-house with us as he got older, and having a joke about the fact that we were now taller and stronger than him

Having a fantastic time at a wedding that included a band and burlesque dancers

The way his youngest great-grandson made him smile

His sharp sense of humour, and the way he was always ready to make a joke or have a laugh

And for his wisdom and the lessons he shared with us from his time growing up – how he was never afraid to let us know that he knew what it was like to struggle, and to fall, but to always get back up again

But the memory that will last forever is the way he'd give us a good squeeze on the shoulder to let us know that, whatever was going on, he knew we were going to be alright.

While I was writing this I dug out some old letters grandad wrote while we were living in Sri Lanka in 1998, and I found one that seemed really fitting.

So in grandad's own words:

We are thinking of you every day. Look after yourself until we meet again. We are missing you very much.

Now I would like to invite Nikki forward to read a poem.

Thank you Nikki.

(poem here)

Every single life only becomes great when the individual sets upon a goal or goals which they believe in, which they can really commit themselves to, which they can put their whole heart and soul into. You have just witnessed some of the stories that have made Eric's life great.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PHOTO TRIBUTE

To celebrate life, you have to live it. To live life, you have to experience all of it. Here now, are some visual images that may help you to recall the way Eric lived his life. They may help to bring to mind your special memories of the times Eric shared with you.

PHOTO TRIBUTE Music: *Chasing Cars* – Snow Patrol

REFLECTION

It is now time to spend quiet time reflecting on all the moments that together built your relationship with Eric. During this time the family will be invited to place rosemary with Eric. Once they have paid their final respects, I will invite you forward to also place rosemary as a sign of remembrance.

In a moment, Jodie will invite the family forward and I know that you might like to stop and give them a hug to convey your sympathy, however this time is very special to the family too as they also remember and reflect upon their time with Eric. It is important that they are able to focus for this short period of time and sit quietly with their special memories. Could I therefore ask you please, to save your hugs and words of sympathy until you move through to the lounge at the conclusion of the service. Thankyou.

Thank you Jodie.

REFLECTION Music: *The Rose* - Nikki

(Family and friends to place rosemary)

FAREWELL

How do we say goodbye to Eric?

Now we know what grief means, and there is no turning back. But while we process that grief, there are feelings of peace and acceptance and overwhelming love that we may not have been aware of; waves of conflicting emotion, and laughter too, and memories we hadn't bothered lately to recall, and they all come flooding back in shared company, and it's all about Eric. There's gratitude, that you had Eric in your life and although he has passed away, there is much of him that will be carried with you.

As we say our final farewell to Eric spend this time embedding your memories in your hearts and minds for safe keeping.

COMMITTAL

Ladies and Gentlemen, if you are able will you please stand for the committal.

Here in the last act immune now to the chances and changes of our mortal lot, we commit the body of Eric Seeley to its natural end. In releasing his body, we do so with respect for that body which during life was a unique and much loved person.

Eric, into the freedom of the wind and the sunshine we release your spirit.

May you go safely and rest in peace.

Please be seated.

CLOSING WORDS

After a death, love and loss go hand in hand. Loss is lifelong and it is our most universal experience. Let yourself give way to the grief and recognise that it is unique for every person, and everyone carries it differently, but it never quite goes away. While it changes over time its impact endures. Gentle acceptance of this fact allows you to integrate the loss of Eric into your life.

We can't know why some things happen...but we can know that love and beautiful memories outlast the pain of grief. And we can know that there's a place inside the heart where love lives always...and where nothing beautiful can ever be forgotten.

As you grieve tell the stories, be grateful for the lessons and treasure the memories.

That concludes the service. The family has asked me to invite you to 'The Boat' in Mindarie to have a beer and celebrate Eric's life.

In a moment, Jodie will escort the family from the chapel and I invite you to follow and join the family in Mindarie.

Funeral Service for: Eric Seeley

Thank you ladies and gentlemen, thank you Jodie.

EXIT

Music: *Let it Be*- The Beatles