

## Tribute from John's children

Allan:

I know Mum is feeling the pain of loss too much to be able to speak here today, but if she could, I think I know what she would say. There are very few women who could have lived with Dad for 55 years. Perhaps only one, for his will was made of iron and his standards exacting and not negotiable. But Mum saw through all that to the man within of infinite generosity, and was rewarded with a love so strong and fierce, yet loyal and gentle, that it made her life a rich and happy one. She always felt that she could not have been loved more.

Juliana:

You'll have noticed marching music among Dad's favourites played today. After sleeping in on Sunday mornings, Dad used to like to put on marching music, turn the volume up full blast and waltz around the lounge room floor, with one child in each arm held high.

Our Dad was not like other Dads. There were a number of things you could put down to his military background. Our childhood resembled that of the Von Trapp family in *The Sound of Music* to some extent. There was an elaborate system of hand signals and whistles to command us. At the beach, Dad would stand like this, and we would know we had to come and come now. Dad was very keen on discipline. Perhaps his greatest legacy to us, however, is not so much discipline, but not being able to be embarrassed by other people!

In Holland, Dad had worked as a time and motion engineer. The passion to find – and persuade others – of the most efficient way of doing things never really left him. Whether you were spinning a top, cleaning the kitchen, organising a bottle drive for the Scouts, or the logistics of the local Anzac ceremony, there was a best way to do it, and Dad would find it, and insist on it. Early on, when Mum was sick, Dad devised the perfect way of doing the washing and fertilising the garden at the same time. He hung the dirty nappies on the line and hosed them, much to the neighbours' dismay.

Dad loved dogs, but the dogs had to be obedient. There were several dogs over the years, Pawpaw who stood guard over Juliana's cot, Bella, Bozo, Goldie. They were exceptionally well-trained. Once a relative from Holland took Pawpaw for a walk to the shops, told him to sit outside, and promptly forgot about him and walked home with his shopping. But where's Pawpaw? we asked. Half an hour later, Pawpaw was still sitting patiently where he had been told to sit.

Dad's teenage children however were less compliant, and this was a source of incomprehension to Dad and conflict at home. But throughout these years he spent endless hours taking us to and from gymnastics, orchestra, ping pong, debating, and

encouraged us to do our best in whatever we did. As we grew older we learnt to accept him as he was, and he learnt to accept us. He made us what we are.

Dad always did what he thought was right, irrespective of what anyone else was doing or what others thought. Whatever he did, he did at 100% if not more. He had an incredible appetite for work and enormous energy. He was the last to leave a working bee, never leaving until a job was finished, and finished to perfection. This was a great asset in his work. The accounts had to balance, and balanced perfectly. Dad could look at an entire sheet of figures for a minute, and put his finger on the one figure that was incorrect. Those around him were also required to meet those standards of perfection, which was not always easy.

On his 80th birthday, he said, "If you had told me when I was 18 that I would live to be 80, I would have laughed at you." He led a full and active life, right up to 2 days before his 91st birthday. These last 3 months have seemed long and difficult--Dad was never going to fit into a hospital or nursing home unless he was running it, or at least keeping the books--but in retrospect it was a short time compared to his 91 strong years. We are grateful for those many years and the memories they have left us.

Allan:

Dad was different. We knew it. Our friends knew it. Everybody who ever met Dad knew it. Most people would not be happy with such a label, but if anything ever needed doing, organizing, fixing or sorting out – all eyes would turn to our father. He wore that badge with pride. He was different because he was never afraid to say what he thought needed saying, and do what he thought needed doing – while everyone else was still deciding what they should be thinking. To him, that was honesty. That was integrity. That was the most important lesson he ever taught us.

And as our children grow up, they may one day find that they too have the courage to be different – when they need to; or when they want to. If they do, they might think they learned that from us. But they'd be wrong. That would be a gift from their Grandpa – our father.