

Dear friends

It is with a heavy heart I deliver these words today about Tony Jackson, loving father to Charles, Thomas and myself – and beloved husband to Elaine.

Tony was born in Grasmere in England on 28 February 1944 (narrowly missing a leap year) at the height of World War II – just over three months before the D-Day amphibious landings at Normandy that conveyed the Allied armies across the English Channel in June.

Dad had a happy childhood, playing rugby with aspirations of one day owning an MG sports car and being a bank manager. Dad was accepting of his parents' decision to migrate to the antipodes and spoke lovingly of his relatives, in particular his dear Aunt Moreen and Uncle Arthur. Dad was proud of his father's logging business which we suspect underpinned his belief in hard work and free enterprise.

With our grandparents Charlie and Maisie, dad emigrated to Australia by ship, setting sail on the P&O – Orient Line *RMS Oronsay*, departing the Port of Tilbury in London and sailing out of the River Thames on 21 April 1960. After what must have been the adventure of a lifetime for the 16 year old – whose only previous overseas trip had been on a school boy exchange to France – dad and his parents visited Malta and Naples before sailing through the Suez Canal (29 April 1960) arriving in Adelaide in May.

Establishing themselves in Gawler, my grandfather obtained work at General Motors Holden in Elizabeth and Grandma Maisie ran local delicatessens on Gawler's main street where dad would help out after school and on weekends.

Dad attended Enfield High which offered a 'Leaving Certificate' necessary to obtain university entrance.

Dad had fond memories of Enfield High, playing rugby, studying the usual sciences plus English, Latin and French. According to Enfield High School 'Student's Record' in 1961, dad was 'cheerful', 'softly spoken and reliable', a 'conscientious' and 'determined student', 'thoroughly trustworthy' – and not to be discounted - displayed 'satisfactory' neatness. He was interested in rugby and the music club, but possibly making him a potentially unsuitable candidate for a medical career, his handwriting 'clear and legible.'

To attend Enfield High, dad would travel to and from Gawler by train, and it was on this daily commute that dad met – Gawler local – John Chambers who became one of his closest friends. The late John Chambers (who's home coincidentally is barely 50 metres from where I am standing) subsequently introduced dad to John's friends and the Gawler Anglican Youth Group – and from there dad was off, moving seamlessly into the Gawler-crowd in what must have been heady days in the 1960's.

Graduating from the famous – or should I say *infamous* - Adelaide University dental class of 1969, dad joined what to us children seemed a rag-tag bunch of live-for-the-moment prankster alumni that would always enjoy a special bond.

Dentistry was an enormous part of dad's life and offered him a secure professional anchor in his new home. Through the dental community, dad made lifelong friendships and gave him an important sense of purpose. It also enabled him to further his love of the sciences, but particularly biology and chemistry.

Dad struck gold when Adelaide dentist, the late Dr Bruce Napier practising in Plympton, agreed to take on a young Tony, fresh out of dental school. To dad, Bruce was a mentor, life-long friend and teacher – and his memory lives on in our family in my brother Thomas – *Napier* – Jackson.

Dad's love of dentistry was as sincere as was his commitment to his patients. We lost count of the number of times growing up when dad dropped everything after-hours as he would flash out of the door advising us that that 'I'm off to the surgery, so and so's copped a hockey stick to the mouth!' – while advising a distraught mother to leave the damaged tooth in place if possible – or in a glass of milk if not!

Dad's dental nurses, hygienists and technician weren't employees – they were his family too. And to Debbie, dad's indefatigable and loyal office manager and friend – you were a special part of dad's professional life and you will always have a special place in our hearts.

In 2004 when dad and Elaine returned to Gawler, even this didn't dent dad's passion for dentistry with dad working part-time at the Gawler Dental Clinic. In 2003, dad and Elaine decided upon a working holiday in Europe to be closer to eldest son Charles. Dad soon found work in Lancashire where he worked at the Lancashire Prison of all places. You can only wonder what these English inmates thought of this chirpy Aussie working on their pearly whites. And while working in the UK, dad did manage finally to get that MG he had always wanted, in British racing green no less!

Dad was committed to the development of the dental profession in South Australia and for decades was an active participant of the Australian Dental Association.

Dad was a loving father and with our mother Elizabeth, made many sacrifices to provide the best opportunities for my brothers and I. To my dad's lasting credit, he prioritised our education and put us through the well-regarded Prince Alfred College in Kent Town – where decades on our connections to the Princes community remain strong.

As youngsters growing up in the 1980s and 1990s, my brothers and I have fond memories of tennis parties and friends over at our house in Joslin, often with dad 12 feet up a ladder painting eaves or ornate plasterwork ceilings or some other fixture. Back in the day, he also had a quirky interest in Alfa Romeo automobiles during an era when an Alfa's mechanical reliability challenged even the most loyal devotee.

Dad's pride of his boys was profound but possibly only rivalled by that of his grandchildren. Watching dad with grandchildren on his knee, seeing the delight on his face when he saw the reaction that one of his countless gifts had brought, was something to behold.

With friends and family, dad was an enthusiastic raconteur – believing that a good story only improved with its re-telling.

Despite his British heritage, dad fully embraced his new home becoming a passionate supporter of the Aussie cricket and rugby teams – and of course the local Adelaide Panthers Aussie Rules team. With the Adelaide Crow's entry into the national AFL competition, dad's passion for the national game reached new heights. For my brothers, the messaging and Video call revolution opened new avenues of jointly barracking for the Crows despite our physical separation overseas.

Dad wasn't fussy about what sports team was playing, provided there was an Aussie or a local side to support. He would lay awake in the evenings watching and listening to sports, the Crows, 36ers, Wallabies, Kangaroos, Socceroos, women's hockey, Tour De France, Americas Cup or World Cup – you name it!

Dad was passionate about the importance of free enterprise and remained a staunch supporter of the Liberal Party throughout his life. My brothers and I

have fond memories of letter-boxing election pamphlets in the 1980s and standing with our dad handing out how-to-vote cards at numerous elections.

In earlier times when rules governing the placement of political signage were perhaps not as strict as they are today, I vividly recall another Liberal Party volunteer telling me that Tony was considered a legend – unmatched in his ability to affix political posters to the highest and most prominent objects around Adelaide.

Dad met dental nurse and national fencing-finalist Elaine Smith in 1994. A wonderful loving relationship followed and dad and Elaine were married in 1996. My brothers and I were delighted to welcome Elaine into our family – as dad was lovingly welcomed in return by Elaine's. The Smith family's deep affection towards dad was complete and a source of strength for dad – and succour to his friends and family.

These same friends and family watched in amazement at dad's transformation from a meat-and-three-vegetables-in-the-kitchen bachelor, into a culinary master in the 1990s. While I was posted to South Australia in the late 1990s, my brother Thomas, wife Sarah and I, have fond memories of elaborate three-course dinners with paired wines at Dad and Elaine's house in Hackney. Stories were shared and valuable family time was spent together over a common passion – good wine.

Dad was not only a great father and a man of great principle, he was also a fiercely loyal friend and put effort into maintaining his diverse range of friends and networks.

Gawler was an integral part of dad's life. When he was advised by his Gawler mates of the opportunity to purchase his parents' childhood home in Coombe

Street – dad leapt at it. An only child, dad’s mates were more than friends – they were family.

And so, this brings us to today, here in the august St George’s Anglican Church in Gawler – with the flag of the Cross of St George – the English flag – flying resplendent on the church’s tower in the town in which dad’s Aussie adventure all began. I’m sure Grandpa Charlie and Maisie would have been proud about what their son had achieved.

We pay tribute to our loving father, loyal friend & husband, dedicated dentist and son of Gawler. Whilst dad may have passed, his stories and his family live on. We take comfort knowing that dad now rests with his cherished family and Heavenly Father.

A life well lived.

Vale Tony Jackson.