Eulogy For Dad

Life is a wonderful and precious gift – and today we honour and remember with gratitude the life of Ronald Stanley Goodwin – husband, father, grandfather and friend. Today I represent Mum (Barbara) and my sisters Joanne and Laura in telling Dad’s story. I’m Bradley Goodwin the youngest of the 3 children and father of 2 of the 5 grandchildren that Dad cherished.

When a life has been witnessed by family, loved ones and friends throughout its short and precious journey one can honestly say that this life had direction, a purpose and a meaning by enriching those of whom it touched.

Ron worked hard for everything he had. He would always say there is nothing wrong with a hard day at work making an honest living. His family was important to him, and he always made sure we were well taken care of. He could be strict when he needed to be, but there was never a man who was prouder of his children and more in love with his wife.

You took Dad’s character as you found him. He called a spade a spade and could be stubborn, gruff, straight-forward and always determined. But beneath that exterior he was just Ron, family man, all round good bloke, mate and larrikin. In the end these traits were so much a part of him.

In his final moments, his thoughts were for those of his wife Barbara – he knew his time had come, he knew his life had changed and in his last act he would leave us as a man needing to maintain his dignity with as much respect and grace for those he cherished most – his family. Dad passed away in Redcliffe Hospital following a stroke in October that caused paralysis down the right hand side of his body and affected his speech and mobility enormously. On Sunday 22 December, he suffered a massive coronary attack – his heart having been weakened by the aspirated pneumonia.

But rather than focus on how Dad passed, let me share with you how Dad lived.
He was born in Brisbane on October 16, 1931, the son of Gilbert and Agnes. From an early age Dad loved horses, cars, fishing, gardening, reading and sharing a drink, a meal and a yarn with mates and his family. As a young man he worked with race horses and in the stables with his grandfather at Deagon. Many days he would exercise each of the horses with a run along Sandgate beach. He engaged in cycling, running and boxing and was as fit as a mallee bull. Both he and his mates got into and out of so much good humoured mischief they knew the local constabulary on a first name basis. He would regale with much delight these stories to us all – mainly out of pride about what they got away with – and what they didn’t. Most of these have past now into the Myth and Legend of the “Sandgate Boys”. He enjoyed a bet now and then and won enough money in the Golden Casket along with his three best mates to buy his pride and joy – his FJ Holden – his first car.

Fortune smiled on Ron, he eventually started working at Poultry Famers at Roma Street in Brisbane in 1955. It was here a young lady named Barbara caught his eye. Typical of dad he wasted no time, they soon began dating. In late 1956 Dad moved up to Bowen to manage his mother’s and step father’s hotel. It was here Mum would visit Dad and they made many friends in the yachting fraternity – many trips were made to untamed Hamilton Island for picnics and youthful tomfoolery. Dad in turn would visit Mum in Brisbane and attempted the unthinkable - dancing with Mum at Cloudland. I’m sure it was he two left feet that won her over.

They were engaged shortly after in 1957 and married in 1958 at Saint Andrews Church in Lutwyche, Dad was 26 and Mum was 22. My sister Jo was born soon after in 1960, Laura in 1962 and myself in 1965. Dad secured a job as a Manager for Bowser & Lever at Herston, selling marble tables, headstones and statues, working heavily within the Italian community and made lifelong friends along the way. The family then moved to our Albany Creek home in 1969.
Mum’s recounted with me her memories of Dad from our time here in the Creek. Apex Christmas parties at Redcliffe and Lions parties in Albany Creek, Fishing holidays with our close relatives on Bribie Island, Romantic Drive In Movies at Boondall, the two of them night fishing off the bridge at Brighton with Jo in a bassinet, Dad helping Laura with her clown suit and placard for the Warana Parade – which won first prize, coaching me and my ACE soccer mates to our first Grand Final victory and the many, many loud and raucous neighbourhood parties where the WHOLE neighbourhood was welcome and attended and Dad was in the thick of it.

I clearly remember so much food, drink and more food & drink coming into our house. Some of these celebrations went on for days especially over Christmas / New Year revolving from house to the next and back again. Everyone was welcome It was here the famous inebriated wailing from the Boney M. Jive Duo was born much to dad’s displeasure – but for the absolute entertainment of the many. It was a journey of many fond, wonderful and cherished memories for Mum who was always at Dad’s side no matter what.

After working for DW Custer selling Ceramic Tiles and Specialised Guns for a living Dad eventually retired in the Creek with Mum where they have lived for 44 years, their children finding partners and raising grand-children whom Dad cherished immensely, he was affectionately known as Poppa.

It is with utmost thanks and love, most especially, for you Dad for your unseen presence which guided all of us forward into this vast and wonderful world, and always keeps us guessing.

With Endless affection for you our Dad, Poppa, Our Mate and cherished Larikin. – May you now Rest in GOD’s Peace – We Will Always Love You – And We will Miss you – Peace Be With Thee Dad.