

## Eulogy at the [Funeral Service](#) of David Barkley, former PRSAV-T Inc. member

David Philip Barkley was born on 4th August 1919, in Gormanston, Tasmania, the youngest son of Ernest Barkley and Sarah Bonnily. Ernest, originally from Melbourne, was a mining engineer at Mt Lyell and Sarah, from Elizabethtown, was a nurse at Queenstown hospital.

When only a few months old, David contracted the Spanish or swine flu, and became very ill. Luckily he survived. 50 million people worldwide died from this virus.

Gormanston, a 5-minute drive from Queenstown, on Tasmania's [west coast](#), was a town built for the Mount Lyell Mining and Railway Company. David enjoyed playing outdoors with the neighbourhood children. He would watch the local football match, which was played on a gravel oval. It remains a gravel oval to this day.

As there was no local secondary school, David was sent to Hobart to boarding school, an eight-hour train journey from Gormanston. He attended Hutchins boys' school, where he matriculated in 1936. David was a prefect and won the science and maths prize. He took up athletics, rowing and football (rugby). Harry and Geoff, David's older twin brothers, attended Scotch College in Melbourne.

Some notes on Hutchins days: David and some mates pooled their money and bought an old Buick, which was kept on the school grounds.

David always had a good appetite, ate quickly and cleaned his plate. He told us that he had to finish his food quickly so that he could get "seconds" at boarding school. Slow coaches missed out.

Read teacher's report.

With all of the boys at boarding school, Sarah would take annual trips to Queensland, to where is now known as the Gold Coast.

There was the occasional trip to Melbourne, especially trips to watch the Boxing Day test at the MCG.

At Melbourne University David studied civil engineering, and joined in the social activities. In Uni breaks he gained valuable paid work experience at the Lauriston Dam near Kyneton, for the Hydro Electric Commission in Tasmania, for the Australian Newsprint Mills and the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. There were only 2 civil engineering graduates in 1941.

David enlisted into the army, and served from 1941 to 1945. He was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. His role was as a field engineer, and as a trainer. He was in charge of up to 120 men in remote parts of Australia. This part of his life was rarely referred to.

After the war David worked for the MMBW. Later he was involved with the strengthening of Burrinjuck Dam, and later again worked for the State Electricity Commission at Yallourn.

David was a keen skier, and regularly made trips with mates to Mt Buller for weekends. This required pooling petrol rations, and carting petrol, food and clothes for the trip in an unreliable 1930s car. This was before the days of ski tows and groomed slopes. The lads would have to climb up the slope to then ski down.

One story David liked to relate was about his time at Burrinjuck dam. On weekends he would go to Canberra, for the nightlife, and stayed at the local hotel, where he had breakfast with [Ben Chifley](#).

David joined the Melbourne Bushwalking Club. Typical trips commenced via train or in furniture vans to the destination. On a trip to Mt Macedon in November 1952 he met Joyce Edgecumbe. Joyce was walking along at the front of the group, and David spotted her and that was it. They were married 4 months later at the Auburn Methodist Church on 6th Feb 1953. Joyce and David were married for 57 years and were a very close couple. Dad idolized Joyce, and would always refer to her as "the boss". People were in awe of their special relationship, and friends referred to them as "the lovebirds".

David was employed by the Ports and Harbours Branch of the Public Works Department for 25 years. His role here included monitoring of waste into the Yarra and Port Phillip Bay. Prior to the 1956

Melbourne Olympics the Yarra required a massive clean up, which David led. Oil spills came under David's jurisdiction, and also the dredging of Port Phillip Bay, Western Port and Lakes Entrance. David organized for the first computer to be purchased for the department, to be used for tidal information for Port Phillip Heads. Indeed, this was one of the first in Australia, and came from the USA. In his retirement David taught himself how to use a PC, enabling email communication.

As a child, I remember my father worked long hours. He left for work before I rose, and came home after I was in bed. There were some privileges for the senior role, including a government car. I remember asking dad to drop me off to school, but he refused, as government cars were not for family use, and David was a stickler for government guidelines. He never bent these rules. He would never accept gifts, dinner or drinks from work colleagues or companies, as this could be construed as bribes.

Joyce and David had a flat in Elsternwick while they built the family home in 4 Richard St, Box Hill North. There were 3 children: Alan, Ann and Margaret. Ron and Nola Bell built next door at 2 Richard Street, with matching children: Len, Janice and Karen, and also Leanne. A lifelong friendship followed, joined later by the Garroways at Number 3.

4 Richard Street also had a veggie patch and fruit and nut trees, tended by David. Picking fruit and veggies with granddad was a highlight of Nicole's and Matthew's visits to their grandparents.

As a small child, I did not understand my father's occupation. When my prep teacher asked what my father did for work, I said he worked in an office. She told me she needed to know more than that. I went home and asked mum. Next day I proudly went to school and announced to the teacher that my father was a civilized engineer.

Probably due to his isolated childhood, David had not acquired mumps as an infant. So he caught this infectious disease from his children, and required a convalescence period at home, but David ended up in hospital with appendicitis. The children remember this well, as this was the introduction of television to the household, and with David in hospital, they had the television for themselves.

David became involved with local community activities, where he helped set up the local Scout group. He joined the local progress association, which successfully lobbied for sewerage to be introduced to Box Hill prior to the originally planned year 2000.

David was always planning ahead for the "what-ifs". As a teenager, I remember being given 3 five-cent pieces in case I needed to call for a lift home, just in case the first 2 calls didn't work. Then dad would arrive in the [HR](#), and as I got into the car I could see his pyjama shirt underneath his jumper.

As a child of the [Depression](#) years, David was very careful with his finances. When purchasing items, he always asked "how much for cash?" And nearly always got the discount.

David always kept himself busy and involved, and retirement was no different. David joined many groups, such as Probus, Life Activities and U3A. He took up swimming (1.2 km at a time) to keep up with Joyce. David kept himself fit, undertaking a on- hour exercise regime every day.

In 1981 David and Joyce built a holiday house at Aireys Inlet. It was constructed of brick, so that it would survive any fires. And it did – it survived Ash Wednesday in 1983.

Once again, David and Joyce became involved in local activities, including [Angair](#), the local environmental group and AIDA.

Tasmania was David's birthplace, and he was always proud to call himself Tasmanian. Anything from Tasmania could be boasted about, e.g. Peter Hudson, the Hawthorn football player.

There were many trips around Australia as the grey nomads, the [Holden](#) towing the caravan. David and Joyce loved the Australian outback. There were friends and trips with MEG, Meanderers and Bird Observers, where the Australian bush was enjoyed.

David became more politically active in his retirement. He campaigned against inappropriate development, and kept himself up-to date with town planning permits. He became a regular contributor to [The Age](#), penning his wisdom when the topics close to his heart were in the news.

When the [Australian Democrats](#) were formed, Dad felt an alignment with Don Chipp to “keep the bastards honest”. He was involved at all levels, and rarely missed a meeting.

The grandchildren remember granddad as a loyal Democrat campaigner, outside their primary school on polling day, handing out [how-to-vote cards](#).

He was also passionate about land tax reform. Absent landlords, obtaining capital gains on unimproved property were his target. He joined a like-minded group called Prosper, a Georgist group, promoting fair and equitable tax for all.

David and Joyce moved to Forest Hill Retirement Village, where they enjoyed “village life”. When Joyce became ill he nursed her until she passed away in 2010.

In his later years David had a soft voice and shuffling gait, which were due to [Parkinson's](#). But he didn't let this slow him down.

He suffered a stroke in January 2012, and his determination helped him through his subsequent health issues. The last 2½ years were spent in BUPA Donvale residential care, where he was surrounded by wonderful dedicated staff. He maintained his sense of humour, and continued to read *The Age*.

David's family visited regularly. The traditional family gatherings were celebrated at BUPA, which David enjoyed hosting.

David was a passionate, tenacious, determined and gentle man.

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