Uncles Harry’s Speech

I’m glad Ken Moxham is here today. Ken was a great friend of Uncle Harry’s and also my third class teacher. So if this speech is stinks you all know who to blame.

Harry Johnston was a name of many names Harry, Uncle Harry, H and just Unc. And there were probably a few others that it would be inappropriate to repeat here today. All of these names were used as real terms of endearment and applied to him with the upmost respect. Such was the nature of the man he was generous, gregarious, loyal, hard working and really just great fun to be around.

Harry made a huge contribution to two sporting Clubs at Gymea both the Gymea United Football Club and the Gymea Bay Cricket Club saw fit to award Uncle Harry Life membership. Uncle Harry is the only individual to receive this Duel honour.

But with Uncle Harry it was never just about his contribution to the individual sports or the Clubs he supported. No Uncle Harrys real legacy was his contribution to our community. Testament to that contribution is everywhere for us all to see today. Put simply Harry made Gymea a better place to live for many many people.

Harry’s enjoyment of life, and love of people was obvious to every on that meet him and very contagious.

Harry could pretty much recall the first name of every Child, and Parent that were ever associated with Gymea Soccer Club. Sometimes people even claim he could names most family pets. He could also usually tell a story or two about their deeds on the Soccer Field. He used to delight in telling folk of one of my better moments on the Soccer field. The situation involving me and a one on one with a goal keeper and the only tuff of grass left on Lilli Pilli Oval. Yes you guessed the Result ….Tuff of grass One Michael Blumor Zero. The Goal Keeper untroubled to collect the rolling ball that had not even been kicked in anger. These stories were recanted with such warmth it was impossible not to laugh.

Harry’s Generosity is Legend and as Treasurer of the Soccer Club this was always an item of some of some concern to me. Both I, Adam Saunders and Brian Ward as Treasurers before me have been puzzled long and hard over the returns in the Bar and the enormous quantity of coolers that we seem to order each year even though we never seem to report any sales of coolers. When questioned about this Harry’s response was typical “Mike, treat people well and they will come back” And he was right the Sunday Afternoon Occasion at Gymea Oval Watch Soccer and chatting with friends is really something very special. Uncle Harry and Terry Hibbins thru the creation of the Boomerang Bar had a lot to do with that atmosphere.

There was no doubt there was one group of people that held a special place in Uncle Harrys Heart and that was the Kids. I of recent times (with Todd’s help) have helped out in the Bar (some would say hindered) and have come to realise just how much hard word it is. It gets harder when there are kids buzzing around everywhere. Not so for Uncle Harry, a smile a wink and a few quite words. He would always say Mike" there all good kids up here" and he was right.

But if Harry loved the Kids there was one group which was not as lucky.... Yes ….Our friends in Black and White... that’s right the Referees. Uncle Harry was my First Soccer coach (yes so it’s his fault I never really amounted to much) and I can report even 42 years ago he was always letting the Refs know in no uncertain terms if they had made a poor decision. In preparing for this speech today I did some calculations and figured out over Uncle Harrys time at Gymea there were (18 \* 4 \* 2 \* 35 ) - 5142 worst refereeing performances ever on Gymea Bay No 1. I think it will be something we will all need to get used to next season when the whistle is blown and that call from the balcony does not come.

In closing like to let Rocket Rosco and Aunty Pat know there are so many people from both Clubs ready to lend a hand.....It’s only fair we return the favour because thru your generosity you gave this remarkable man the time to make all our lives so much more fun.

One last thing, on behalf of the Soccer Club. I would formally like to apologise to all those offended by the sight of Rosies, Wadey, Saundos et als uncovered legs.