

ROGER BILBROUGH JOYCE : 1924-1984

Last October the Australian Society for Sports History lost one of its original and most valued members when Roger Joyce died while playing squash for La Trobe University, the university where he had been Professor of History since 1975. At the time of his death Roger was due to retire, and had made arrangements to continue with his wife Barbara, an active and fulfilling life in the more peaceful countryside of northern New South Wales.

Most of Roger's life was spent in the eastern states. He graduated with brilliance in history and law from his home university Sydney, and after post-graduate work in Canberra and Cambridge, where he took an MLitt, he accepted a position at the University of Queensland where he taught from 1953 to 1974. His commitment to university education was total and his scholarship formidable, but it is for others to talk of his fifty and more books, articles and reviews, crowned by the biography of Samuel Walker Griffith that appeared just before his death.

We of the Australian Society of Sports History recognize in Roger one of the guiding spirits and enthusiastic supporters of our Association. Although Roger's wide range of publications did not actually cover sport, he was, with Barbara, a regular participant at our Conferences from the first and a source of great encouragement to many younger students and post-grads in the field. In 1981 he was the major organizer of the Sporting Traditions Conference held at La Trobe University and although Study Leave prevented him attending the 1983 Conference held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground he gave unstintingly of his help in getting that conference. started.

Roger's enthusiasm and commitment to academia were equalled only by his passion for sport. He followed most sports with a zeal that only the most energetic could keep up with: he attended Sheffield Shield cricket matches as well as Tests, and indeed was at the Gabba a week before he died: in Australian Rules he followed Richmond because their colours were the same as his Rugby Union team in Sydney; he did not miss a minute of the America's Cup victory on television, and although the skills of yachting were not among his greatest sporting achievements he gave every encouragement to his three sons from his first marriage to excel in this sport. Roger and Barbara were also an essential part of our society's sub-culture of horse racing aficionados.

Roger was also an active sportsman: rugby and cricket for his universities, and any time the occasion arose later in life for a social game. But it was squash that Roger loved best of all, playing it from his army days during the Second World War and reaching the top pennant ranks in Queensland. It was as a squash partner that I knew Roger best. He played to win, with commitment and skill; but he never resorted to dubious tactics or queried doubtful decisions, and when the game was over he could relax and enjoy himself with his opponent. If the soul of a man can be told from the way he plays games then Roger must be accorded the highest honour of all, for he was the epitome of the sporting ideal.

Roger is very much missed as a friend and colleague. To his wife Barbara, who shared his love of sport, we extend our deepest sympathy.

Bill Murray