

John Henderson Murray: A much-loved member of his local community

By BRUCE HARRIS - Sept. 13, 2015, 9:30 p.m.



1932-2015

MORE than 200 friends celebrated the life of the late John Henderson Murray at the Belmont Bowling Club on August 20.

A pharmacy graduate of the University of Sydney, John married Mary in 1955 and they had two children, Kerrie and John.

Also in 1955, John opened the Soul Pattinson Pharmacy at Cardiff, which he operated for more than 50 years.

Many have memories of John doing after-hours home deliveries of medications, often accompanied by his then school-aged children.

He loved pharmacy, cared deeply for the wellbeing of his community, and those feelings were certainly reciprocated.

His colleague there from 1992, Bob Godhard, spoke emotionally of the respect, admiration and friendship the two men shared, working with one another.

John Murray in later years.

John was born to William (Bill) and Josephine on December 24, 1932.

When John was 9, his father Bill was appointed principal at Swansea school, previously having taught at Hillston and Casino.

John attended Newcastle High School, obtaining his Leaving Certificate in 1948 and started his pharmacy degree the following year.

During his high school and university years, playing rugby featured strongly in John's life, and locally he played first grade for Lakes United.

Then there was the musical John Murray.

A talented violinist, while at high school he had competition success in the Newcastle Eisteddfod and played in the Newcastle High School orchestra and later with the University String Chamber Group.

Family, work, and life in general meant the violin was put away; then some years ago he reignited his passion for the instrument and took lessons again, redoing the examination for Grade 7.

He was recruited to play in Newcastle Light Opera performances – he actually acted in their production of Fiddler on the Roof, playing his beloved violin.

In the early 1960s, John was president of Cardiff Soccer Club, and later became a bowler, being an active member of Cardiff Bowling Club, then Valentine and Belmont bowling clubs.

He famously initiated interstate competition for what is known to the bowling fraternity as “arm extension bowls”.

A proud Lion, John was an invaluable member from 1962 until 2015. He was the first president of the new Cardiff Lions Club in 1962, and the youngest district governor, from 1969 to 1970.

He was a man who epitomised the values that all Lions embrace: that of service to the community.

In 1978, John married Joan in Coolangatta and when they settled in Valentine, he transferred to the Valentine Lions Club and was actively involved.

To members of Valentine Lions Club he is irreplaceable, and only his steady pharmacist's hand could be trusted with the control of the "something else for your coffee or tea?" on Anzac Days in Allambee Park.

John and Joan spent many happy years together, enjoying travelling in their van up and down the coast.

Their favourite spot was Burrum Heads in Queensland, where John also filled in as a locum pharmacist.

John passed away, peacefully, on August 1 at Warners Bay Private Hospital.

He is survived by his wife Joan, his son John jnr and his daughter Kerrie and two grandchildren, his brother Brian, and his step-children.

Many, many friends had visited John in his final weeks and his family expressed their great comfort in seeing for themselves the love and esteem expressed by all for their father and husband.



Charter president John Murray accepting the flag set from president Tim Mayo of sponsoring Club Toronto. Charter night April 13, 1962.