

Family and friends gather at Christ Church Cathedral to farewell Don



HONOUR: David Jones, Neil Livingstone and Ian Livingstone, above, toast the memory of Don Maskey, left, during his funeral service at Christ Church Cathedral.

Storyteller will be missed

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By **HELEN GREGORY**

PROMINENT Novocastrian and prolific *Newcastle Herald* letter writer Don Maskey has been remembered as a one-of-a-kind storyteller, hard-working meat industry icon and much loved family man.

Hunter Thomas Donald Maskey AM, had described his innings as "a good life, well spent" before he passed away at his home on January 6, the day after his 78th birthday.

Mourners filled Christ Church Cathedral on Tuesday afternoon for

his moving service, which began with Australian tenor David Hobson singing *Do You Hear What I Hear* before about 30 members of Mr Maskey and his wife Libby's family entered the church singing an acoustic version of *Amazing Grace*.

Helen Harvey told the congregation of the deep love between her sister Libby and her brother-in-law, saying they were both gregarious, entrepreneurial, left school "in a hurry to get on with the business of life", loved to chat, were the life of the party and liked to make people happy.

"Their life was an open house," she said.

"They invited the world into their home - the kids in the neighbourhood learned to swim in their pool. [they held] family events for all of our families and every occasion was an event to remember."

"Their life was built on the mantra of happiness - we saw it when they were together and they wanted everyone to be a part of it."

Ms Harvey said the sisters had grown up in Helen Street, Merewether, just two streets away from where Mr Maskey had set up

his first butcher shop in 1957, with £1000 he saved from selling tomatoes on the side of the road.

The couple would later travel Australia and the world, returning always with a "bag full of hilarious stories."

Mr Maskey's nephew Ian Livingstone held back tears but also laughed as he recalled anecdotes about the fun-loving father of two and grandfather of three.

"When you think of Don, it would be with a smile," he said.

Mr Livingstone spoke of the young student at Belmont Public

School who had grown up with underwear made from inner flour-bag fabric, who waited whenever a Catalina flew overhead to feel a drop of water fall from the flying boats and who must have set a record when asked to leave Belmont Anglican Church's Sunday school.

Two years of national service made him "firm, fair and approachable", but his lighthearted nature shone through after he sold his shops and took up golf, claiming Belmont Golf Club awarded him a prize only because "no one else showed up."