

SPEECHES BY THE OUTGOING AND INCOMING
PRESIDENTS AT THE 52ND ANNUAL DINNER
ON SATURDAY, 6th MARCH, 1976

"THE INCOMING PRESIDENT" Legatee G. W. Blackwood.

The specification for a candidate for the role of President of Melbourne Legacy is that the member shall -

1. be between 5'3" and 5'6" high;
2. have a full head of hair with some of it between his mouth and nose;
3. be a mechanical engineer;
4. be a member of Heidelberg Branch of Melbourne Legacy;
5. Have a "George" in his first names.

Let me deal biographically with Legatee Eric George Baker. Eric was born at Dubbo, N.S.W. and received his general education at Maitland, N.S.W.

He joined the R.A.A.F. in Sydney in November 1939 and saw service with No. 3 Squadron in the Middle East from 1940 to 1943. On his return to Australia he had short term postings at Canberra and Melbourne and then served in the S.W.P. area with 112 Mobile Fighter Control Unit until the end of hostilities.

Legatee Baker joined Melbourne Legacy in 1967 on the proposal of Legatees Jock McAuley and Ted Savage. He served on Girls' Classes Committee for a number of years and as

Chairman of Heidelberg Branch in 1971

Secretary of Heidelberg Branch in 1972

Elected Member 1972)

Junior Vice-President 1973) Board of Management

Senior Vice-President 1974) Postings

Past Senior Vice-President 1975)

The record at first was not clear as to whether Eric came to Melbourne to undertake tertiary education at the R.M.I.T. or to track down a certain servicewoman, a W.A.A.A.F. named Jean.

But the real story is that Eric met that servicewoman during his sojourn in Melbourne and they were married in Melbourne prior to his S.W.P. posting.

The marriage produced two charming daughters who are now married and it is pleasing to us to have their husbands as our guests tonight.

That is a light hearted but factual description of the man that Melbourne has elected as its 54th President and I request the assembly to rise whilst Legatee Baker repeats the obligation he undertook when he joined Legacy.

TOAST "THE RETIRING PRESIDENT" - Legatee E. G. Baker

Sir Edmund Herring, Mr. Minister, Distinguished Guests, Fellow Legatees:

A President of Melbourne Legacy, or for that matter, the President of any other Legacy Club, has many pleasant duties to perform during his year of office.

I am sure my year as President will be a rewarding one, and doubly so if even a proportion of my tasks bring me as much personal pleasure as this - to pay a tribute to the man who has been our President and with whom I have had the honour to work.

TOAST "THE RETIRING PRESIDENT" - Legatee E. G. Baker (Cont'd.)

George Blackwood had a nickname in the army - and those of you who served in RAEME will most probably have heard it - George was known as the "Galloping Major". We who have been privileged to be in George's team this year and have worked with him on Committees and Board over the years, can well understand why. He never stops.

I am sure that 1975 will be a year that George Blackwood will look back on with a great deal of personal pleasure and satisfaction.

It was fitting that in George's year of office two very significant events occurred in Melbourne Legacy. They were, firstly, that some 29 widows moved into residence in two blocks of flats which Melbourne Legacy purchased and renovated with the aid of finance from the Federal Government. And secondly, we have seen the restructuring of Melbourne Legacy Board and Legacy Committees.

George was deeply involved with the two Committees which did the ground-work leading to the successful completion of both activities.

During his address last year, George mentioned a number of Past-Presidents of Melbourne Legacy, and summed up, in a word or two, his appreciation of his predecessors. He described one as 'the jovial', another as 'the humane', others as 'jubilant', 'friendly', 'meticulous'. I would like to add another name to that list: George Blackwood, "the sincere". Whether George was addressing a Legacy Dinner, speaking to some of our Junior Legatees, chatting with senior widows: one thing was most evident - the man's sincerity.

George once mentioned to me that joining Legacy was the second sensible thing he did. I don't have to tell you what the first one was: It was, of course, marrying Bernice.

Your fellow-Legatees agree, George, that Bernice has been a wonderful support and companion to you during your year of office. We ask you to tell her of our sincere thanks for the part she has played during the past twelve months.

As you know, the only tangible recognition made to a Past President in respect of his year office is a Past President's Certificate. The Certificate I now have the honour to present reads:

"Legatee G. W. (George) Blackwood
Year of Office 1975

In commemoration of your service to Legacy,
More especially in the office of President,
This certificate is presented with the sincere
regard and thanks of your fellow Legatees"

and is signed by me and our Hon. Secretary, Karl Robertson.

Before proposing the toast, may I, on behalf of all those present, wish you continued good health to enjoy that retirement you so richly deserve.

Sir Edmund Herring, distinguished guests and fellow Legatees, would you charge your glasses and drink with me the toast I now give you.

Gentlemen, I give you the toast: "the retiring President" Legatee George Blackwood.