
VALE

LEGATEE ALFRED NEWCOMBE KEMSLEY

DIED 24TH FEBRUARY 1987

At the commencement of the Service at Brighton Town Hall the President of Melbourne Legacy, Legatee Bruce Wilson, said:-

Today we are assembled to pay tribute to and give thanks for the life of Colonel Sir Alfred Newcombe Kemsley - Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (K.B.E.) Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George (C.M.G.) Meritorious Service Medal (M.S.M.), Efficiency Decoration (E.D.).

The service which will follow, the speakers who take part and this venue, are as requested by Kem himself, and Lady Kemsley has ensured that his wishes have been respected.

Legatee "Kem" Kemsley was the only Legatee to have had membership of more than one Club simultaneously. This came about in 1984 when Sydney Legacy invited him to become a member. Sydney Legacy and all other N.S.W. Legacy Clubs are represented here today by Legatee Karl Robertson, who represents Sydney Legacy Club on Legacy Co-ordinating Council - our National Body.

The Chief of the General Staff, Lieut. General Peter C. Gration, A.O., O.B.E., is represented here today by Brigadier Brian Wade, Commander 3rd Military District and Major General Derek C.J. Deighton, A.O., M.B.E., General Officer Commanding Logistic Command, is represented by Brigadier David McLachlan, Chief of Staff Logistic Command.

Legatee Bruce Wilson later introduced the Speakers - Legatee Ken Clarke, O.B.E., M.C., O.R.S. (Japan), who dealt with Legatee Kemsley's Legacy and Army Service and then Wing Commander Peter Isaacson, D.F.C., A.F.C., D.F.M., Chairman of the Shrine Trustees who dealt with Kem's work in connection with the Shrine, The Corps of Commissionaires and other aspects of his life. Both of the above addresses are now printed hereunder in full.

LEGATEE KEN CLARK'S ADDRESS

For what has been a wondrous friendship, I am privileged to speak of Kem, a giant among men. There is much I would like to say, including recounting of personal anecdotes. However, in the time available, more will be left unsaid than said. We could spend the day and still not recount his achievements. Kem's was a life that bristled with vigour, competitiveness, and an unflagging drive for excellence. A life that shone with elegance, intelligence and compassion. He was a man of great good sense, so let this day be one of celebration for this gracious, perceptive, lively, incisive man. His record of service to his fellow man begins perhaps in March 1915, in Adelaide, when he enlisted in the A.I.F. as Private Kemsley. His record in two wars is a saga of service.

May 1915 he sailed for Egypt, and in that year was promoted to Corporal, then Sergeant. In October 1916 in France, he was Commissioned, finishing his war service in 1919 as Staff Captain, Australian Corps H.Q. In the second war in 1940 he began his service as a Staff Captain, was D.A.D.O.S. 4th Division. In 1942 Lt. Col. A.A.O.C., and in 1943 was promoted to Colonel as business advisor to the Minister for the Army. In 1983 he became a Life Member of the Naval and Military Club.

Thousands of serving Legatees throughout Australia, will remember him most vividly for his service to Legacy, which he joined in December 1923.

His life is the history of Legacy. He served as an advisor to countless Legacy widows and children, and took a dominant leadership role in all our activities, some highlights of these are:

He served as advisor to I.L.C., served on the Residences, Finance, History and Traditions, ANZAC Observance, Personnel and Membership Committees. Was Recording Secretary, and in 1932-33 was our President. A vignette in my memory is the Federal Conference of Legacy Clubs in Hobart in 1949, when after a full day of debate and discussion concerning the Code of Legacy, Kem undertook to prepare a draft. He worked through the night, and next morning presented his draft to the Conference. It was accepted unanimously without alteration. Let me read it to you.

"THE SPIRIT OF LEGACY IS SERVICE"

"The care of dependants of comrades who served their country in war and who died on service or subsequently affords a field for service. Safeguarding the interests of children is a service worth rendering, and their interests include their mental, moral, vocational and physical welfare. Personal effort is the main essential. Inasmuch as these are the activities of Legacy it is your privilege to accept the Legacy of fallen comrades."

The mind and dedication of Kem pervade every aspect of our Legacy Activities and ideals. He thought and spoke with stunning clarity, economy and verve. He brought to us, his fellow Legatees, wisdom and the beauty of a searching mind, endlessly insistent that mediocrity be rejected, that means used be not incompatible with ends sought, in all things seeking the higher ground. There were few problems he could not tackle zealously, with conspicuous success.

The history of Legacy will set aside a special place for him, for he was an intellectual, endowed with an abundance of gifts, great personal charm, brilliance of mind and the capacity for tireless work, and above all, an eternal boyishness. Kem had a special relationship with each of us, he touched and enriched us all. We will remember his sense of values, goals and ideals, his influence will continue.

To Anne, Liston and Jean, who were always in his thoughts, we offer our condolences. Let us all derive strength from the ideals he represented.

WING COMMANDER PETER ISAACSON'S: EULOGY

SIR ALFRED KEMSLEY was a great man. From 3rd March 1915, which was the day he enlisted in the AIF until 30th June 1986 when he walked out of his city office for the last time, Kem served the community. A recital of the organisations he served, the Government Offices he held, a list of his political, business and social activities would take several hours - the closely typed list extends to 17 foolscap pages. Between all these public activities he found time to act as an unofficial and very private advisor to leading Politicians and businessmen. And of course, he was a devoted husband and father.

This great gathering is a tribute to his life. Everyone here has been touched by Kem's life at some time. whether it was a matter of momentous importance or a simple service, Kem gave the same personal attention to the request.

In matters of politics Kem was the ultimate power broker. City Councillors, Lord Mayors and members of State and Federal Parliament, Cabinet Ministers and Party Executives sought advice from Kem. Many owe their high positions to his counsel and influence.

Victorians in particular are indebted to Kem. During his service on the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission he initiated many of the regulations which have enabled Melbourne to grow, but remain a clean, uncluttered city, fed by suburban dormitories also inspired by those early planners. Kem was a member of the Council of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce from 1947 to 1976 - just under 30 years. This was a period of great change in Melbourne's business life - changes which the chamber fostered.

The advertising profession owes a lot to Kem. Soon after the war, he and two friends, John Barnes and Basil Hayler, formed United Services Publicity which soon became one of the largest advertising agencies in Australia servicing a myriad of blue chip clients. As with all his other business activities, Kem was a member of the industry body and so helped set and maintain ethical and creative standards. So too did he serve radio. As pre-war General Manager of 3UZ he pioneered many program formats and brought to public attention young men and women who later become leading stars in the theatre, films, radio and television.

What was the greatest influence in Kem's Life? I think it was the army.

He joined the army in 1911 at the age of 15. In 1915 he volunteered for the AIF, served in Egypt, France and Belgium and was awarded the Meritorious Services Medal. After the war he rejoined the Citizen Forces and served until 1928 when he transferred to the reserve of officers. In 1940 he rejoined the militia, transferred to the AIF in 1942 and in 1943 reached the pinnacle of his military service when he was appointed business advisor to Army Headquarters with the status and remuneration of a Lieutenant General. This association continued until 1947.

Kem's service in the first and second world wars led to his abiding interest in Legacy and the Shrine of Remembrance.

He was an original Legatee in Melbourne, helped found Clubs in Adelaide, Albury and Mildura, served on most Committees and was Legacy President.

Legacy led to the Shrine of Remembrance because it was Legacy that fought opposition to the Shrine being built as Victoria's War Memorial. Kem was appointed a Trustee of the Shrine in 1934 and was a Trustee until he died. For 36 years he was Deputy Chairman and succeeded Sir Edmund Herring as Chairman in 1978. Although the Chairmanship was a lifetime appointment he graciously and voluntarily relinquished it in my favour in 1983.

What other activities did Kem fit into his crowded fulfilling life? He was a member of the Town & Country Planning Board, the Deputy Chairman of the Australian National Travel Association, on the Council of the United Service Institute, of the War Nurses Memorial Committee, the Corps of Commissionaires the Sir Thomas Blamey Memorial Fund and a myriad of other ex-service organisations.

The Unemployed Youths' Association, Victorian Society for Crippled Children, St. Johns Ambulance, Toc H were among the charities he helped physically and financially.

In between all this community activity, Kem earned a living. In addition to his major business interest as a Director of United Services Publicity he was a Director or Advisor to many leading companies and organisations - Fire Fighting Equipment Pty. Ltd., Ponsford Newman & Benson Pty. Ltd., the Australian Institute of Management, Australian Wool Corporation, Travelodge Pty. Ltd., Dominion Press Pty. Ltd., owned by his dear friend, Donovan Joynt V.C., were among the companies of which he was a director or advisor. Service to Monash University, Melbourne University and the aborted fourth University were his contribution to education.

There were few charities, few business organisations, few political groups, who did not seek Kem's advice or help. He gave both freely regardless of rest or pleasure to fulfill what he believed to be his obligations to society. Kem was loyal. Kem was patriotic. Kem was generous with his time, with his money, with his advice.

In the biblical sense I loved Kem. So did many other men and women because he exemplified all that was good in an Australian gentleman.

Today we honour Sir Alfred Kemsley, Knight of the British Empire, Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, holder of the Meritorious Service Medal and Efficiency Decoration. We honour plain "Kem", the man who held his hand to us, who touched all our lives with his personality, his warmth, his generosity, his love.

Our thoughts today are exemplified by a paraphrase of the soldiers requiem -

"He shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old,
Age did not weary him, nor the years condemn,
At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,
We will remember him".

We remember too his joy, his helpmate for so many years, his Anne, Lady Kemsley who mourns with us today, and his children of whom he was so proud. And we thank them for allowing him to share his life with us.

After the ceremony at Brighton Town Hall, a brief ceremony was held at the Boyd Chapel at the Necropolis at Springvale. The Service was simple, the Legacy President recited the following poem written by L.F.J. in 1978.

TH A.N.K. S

I would tell you of the Colonel - though I wonder if I should
And I do not mean that Colonel who is "finger lickin" good;
For here within our Melbourne Club we've a Colonel who's a gem
There's but one I could allude to - good old Colonel "Kem".
Often have I wondered and I'm sure you've wondered too
When there is no fighting what do Colonels do;
There's no need for battle orders - or manoeuvres to be planned
Or to issue daily orders even soldiers understand.
But to "Kem" this is no problem, he doesn't need a war
He can epitomize authority on almost any score;
He is strong and he's assertive as everybody knows
And he doesn't get too worried about protruding toes.
But he is a father image within our noble ranks
And many of our members have offered him their thanks;
For if you are in trouble and know not what to do
The chances are The Colonel is the man to get you through.

After reading the poem the following words from our ritual were spoken by Legatee Wilson:-

"In silence with thankful hearts, let us remember the life and work of one comrade Legatee Kem Kemsley, Together with all those, especially his comrades, who made the supreme sacrifice.

"Legatees - We will remember Departed Comrades -

"LEST WE FORGET"

This short ceremony was followed by the Last Post and Reveille, beautifully rendered by a Bugler from the Band of the 3rd Military District.

LEGATEE SIR ALFRED NEWCOMBE KEMSLEY, KBE, CMG, ED.

Legatee Sir Alfred Kemsley was born in March, 1896, and during WWI served with the 2nd Div. A.A.S.C. and Australian Corp. H.Q. as Staff Captain. During WWII served with the 4th Div. D.A.D.O.S. and at Army H.Q. as the Director of Organisation and Business Advisor to the Army.

His present appointments include: Board Governor to the Corps of Commissionaires; Chairman of both the Shrine of Remembrance Board of Trustees and the Field Marshal Blamey Memorial Committee. He is also Vice-Chairman of the General Sir Edmond Herring Memorial and is a Member of the Nurses Memorial Centre.

His many business appointments included: Secretary, Metropolitan Town Planning Commission; General Manager, 3UZ Radio Station; a Member of the Federal Executive of Federation of Commercial Broadcasting; a Founding Director of the United Services Publicity; a Member of the Board of Management of the Victorian Institute of Advertising; a Member of the Council of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce; a Member of the Institute of Public Affairs; Member of the Australian Institute of Management; Member of the Board of the Australian National Travel Association; a Director of the Fire Fighting Equipment Victoria and a Director of the firm of Ponsford, Newman & Benson.

In 1980 he was created a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire. In 1973 he was made a Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George and in 1960 - became a Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

He joined Legacy in 1923 and was proposed by Legatee Harold Cohen, the first President of Melbourne Legacy. He has been a continuous member of Melbourne Legacy since that date and was President in 1932-1933.

Despite his many business achievements, Legatee Kemsley has been a very active member throughout all these years of Legacy.

'Kem', has provided forceful leadership to Legacy in general and Melbourne Legacy in particular, for well nigh on sixty years.

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LEGATEE FRANK MELDRUM

Legatee Meldrum was born in 1892 and joined Legacy on 23rd September, 1923. He was nominated by Legatee Sir Stanley Savige and Legatee P.W. 'Pip' Powell, a Public Accountant.

Legatee Meldrum is the last of those who attended the first Legacy Luncheon in 1923, and would be the senior serving Member of Legacy in Australia.

During WWI Frank enlisted in 1915, in the 5th Btn. A.I.F. and served in Egypt, Gallipoli and France before his professional status was recognised and he was subsequently Commissioned. He had previously graduated in Dentistry by way of Wesley College and Melbourne University.

Frank continued to serve with the 12th Field Ambulance, was Mentioned in Despatches and was subsequently discharged with the rank of Captain, after 1520 days of Active Service. During WWII, he served with distinction as the O.C. of Dental Units.

In 1923, Frank was one of the leading spirits of Melbourne Legacy and in all their principal activities which were associated with physical and cultural welfare of young girls and boys.

Brimful of energy and enthusiasm, he formed the first Comradeship Committee and had an immediate influence on a wide range of Legacy activities.

He also served as Chairman on Advisor, Education, Room Management, Junior Legacy, Literary and Debating, I.L.C., Medical, Dental and Personnel Committees, but after thirty years of service to Legacy, his doctors ordered him to 'slow down'

Not content with this Frank joined the Royal Flying Doctor Service and gave many years of service in the Outback. He later retired to Tweed Heads, clearing a fine block for pineapples and flowers but then moved to Wollongong, Adelaide and Bamerra before moving to Sydney.

Frank has always retained his Melbourne Legacy Membership and is also a Member of Sydney Legacy.

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