

DONOVAN JOYNT, V.C.

LEGACY MEMORIAL ADDRESS

- . Donovan Joynt was a man of many parts.
- . He was a man with many and diverse interests.
- . And Legacy was one of his abiding interests, for more than 60 years.
- . You have heard of his high sense of duty, his compassion for others, his toughness and his experience in the school of hard knocks.
- . Given that background, it was inevitable that he should be one of that small band of ex-servicemen who met in Melbourne on 25 September 1923 and formed the first Legacy Club. His file shows that Joynt was proposed by Legatee Blackett, seconded by Legatee Eller, and allotted Club Number 7!
- . With his energy and enthusiasm, Donovan Joynt became a member of the Board of Management of Melbourne Legacy in February 1924, and played a very important part in the early development of the Club.
- . When Legacy decided late in 1925 to broaden its Charter, Joynt put forward the vital motion that the welfare of the widows and children of departed comrades should be the principal task of Legacy, the task that continues to this day.
- . Subsequently, in June 1926, Joynt and Stan Savige, as members of the Deceased Soldiers' Children's Welfare Committee, were deputed to seek the approval of the War Widows' Association to conduct classes, counselling and camps for their boys - a job these two brave men accepted with some trepidation!
- . Bill Russell recalls in Savige's biography, how they fortified themselves at the Naval & Military Club before facing the widows at the old Anzac House in Russell Street, where the T. & G. Building now stands.

. With his high public profile as a V.C. winner, Joynt warmed up the audience, then handed over to Savige. He had scarcely begun when a widow stood up and said, "You can have my little bloke - he's too much for me!"

. That clinched the argument. The widows agreed enthusiastically and Junior Legacy, Melbourne was born, with nearly 100 boys attending the first class in the following week.

. The scheme was extended to the opposite sex two years later, and, once again, Donovan Joynt played an important role in the establishment of Legacy Girls' Classes.

. This remarkable man's special talents were again used to the full in 1926 and 1927 during the campaign for the building of the Shrine of Remembrance.

. The original plan for a National Shrine in the Domain was in danger of being dropped, in favour of a Civic Square at the top of Bourke Street. Melbourne Legacy, at a special meeting in August 1926, decided on the motion of Legatees Joynt and Kemsley to put its weight firmly behind the Shrine proposal.

. In the intense battle for public support which followed, Donovan Joynt played a major role in obtaining media backing, the endorsement of General Sir John Monash at an R.S.L. dinner, and eventually the support of the R.S.L. itself. The rest is history.

. It can truly be said that the Shrine would never have been constructed had it not been for the work of Legacy. And although this was a great team effort, Donovan Joynt's role cannot be over-estimated.

Legacy owes many other things to this man. He served on the Public Affairs Committee. The Anzac and Armistice Day Observance Committees, the Finance Committee and the Probation Committee. He was closely identified with the Boys Literary and Debating Class, the inauguration of the Intermediate Legacy Club, and the annual preparation of the members' personal diary with its wealth of information for the assistance of widows and children. He initiated the production and sale of Christmas Cards as a means of augmenting Junior Legacy funds, a project which netted more than \$42,000 in 20 years from its inception in 1957.

Characteristic of Donovan's dedication as a Legatee is a letter he wrote on 5th December 1973 to the Chairman of the Anzac Observance Committee, tendering his resignation after 38 years service on the Committee - practically since its inception - and saying he would miss the work involved tremendously - all this at the age of 84!

He was also a good Legatee among Legatees, with his strong sense of comradeship and his sometimes sardonic humour. Legacy House staff recall how they used to watch from the third floor windows to see what he would be wearing to the annual Anzac Comradeship night - and particularly the night when he marched up Swanston Street for several blocks, in full German uniform and carrying a German rifle! No policeman would have dared to question this short, stocky man with the pale blue eyes, whether he was in German uniform or wearing his own faded Australian Khaki, now proudly displayed in the Comradeship Room at Legacy House - a permanent reminder of Donovan Joynt for as long as Melbourne Legacy lives.

. It can be seen, from this brief presentation of his activities as a Legatee, that Legacy owes Donovan Joynt a tremendous debt. His understanding of the needs and problems of ordinary people, based on his personal experiences, his toughness of spirit and his strong bond with boys as a counsellor and friend, fitted him admirably for this task. And his public stature as a gallant soldier and exemplary leader enabled him to play a major role in many of Legacy's early achievements for Legacy families and for the community in general.

. It has been said that he was a hard man to control, for he was essentially a person of quick reflexes, tackling the immediate problem without looking too far ahead to the consequences. Perhaps we could liken him to a laser beam - operating with intense energy on a very narrow front. And, like a laser, he was a very useful resource to have around in a time of special need.

. A man of action - but a caring man for those he liked - a blunt man who didn't waste time on matters he regarded as non-essential- Donovan Joynt, V.C., was the epitome of the Australian Digger.

. He was a man who believed in the simple ideals of duty to God, Queen and Country, of personal service, of service above self. And he was a splendid Legatee.

. He was a man of whom it can be truly said,

"WE SHALL NOT SEE HIS LIKE AGAIN".

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KDG.

12 May 1986.