

Gordon Samuels

On behalf of the family of Gordon Samuels, I welcome every one of you here today to celebrate his life and to acknowledge the privilege we have enjoyed in knowing him, the most generous of men, the most formidable advocate for justice.

In one sense we say farewell. But in another sense this is not farewell. We will miss him greatly but we will not forget him, *ever*.

Gordon was a scholar of Balliol College, a wartime soldier, a barrister who rose to be the leader of the NSW Bar, a teacher, a judge of appeal, a law reformer, the chancellor of a great university *and* the governor of this State.

He was a man of high principle and complete integrity. The list of his achievements is long and honourable. I have mentioned but some. He served the people of Australia and the people of this State well indeed. His public service was recognized by his appointment as a Companion of the Order of Australia and a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order.

He wore these honors lightly. There was no pomposity or side about him. For him his greatest and by far the most important achievements centred on his devotion to and care and support, as a husband, a father and a grandfather for Jackie, Deborah and Selina, Rebecca and Samuel and as a father in law for Chris. Gordon was a person of great wit and humour enlivened by the not infrequent dig at the pretensions of others.

Ushered to the lavatory in a lordly house he visited in Bowral he found, he said, entry just possible but exit, until help came, impossible, due to the thickness and richness of the sheepskin carpet which had jammed the door shut. Linoleum was, he thought, more suitable.

Once when walking home from a dinner along William Street, Gordon and I popped into a nightclub Whisky A Gogo, as one might, to use the facilities. We were dressed, as was the fashion of the time, in raincoats and brown felt Hats. According to Gordon two of the patrons when they saw us jumped out a window. Gordon said we looked like card carrying members of the consorting squad. I, of course, have no recollection.

Coached by Jackie, Gordon and I did a vaudeville show in a marquee in the grounds of a well known Sydney Girls School, before an audience of school girls and their parents. We were doing well, as you would expect, until an interruption caused by the unscheduled arrival of the Head Mistress dressed in black and very tight tights to take part in the act. To the delight of the students and their parents and our mortification she stole the show. We laughed a good deal but never ventured onto the stage together again.

Gordon was an eminent and learned lawyer blessed with lucidity of expression in all he said and wrote. This itself evidenced a profound understanding of the subject in hand. He remains one of Australia's greatest judges. His capacity to give well structured and compelling judgments ex tempore and without pause at the conclusion of long and complicated argument was in my experience unique.

Particularly during this past year Gordon displayed his great courage in battling with discomfort and the deterioration of those capacities of hearing, sight and mobility we take for granted. As we would expect he fought on against the odds but was gradually driven back. With him to the end stood his family. At all times Gordon would have felt their unstinting and unending love for him.