

On behalf of the family I'd like to thank you all for joining us today to share in memories of Dad, and to thank the speakers for their tributes.

We're also very grateful to CRAHW, CEPAR, the Australian Academy of Social Sciences and especially the Australian Association of Gerontology for helping to make this event possible.

And in particular, we'd like to thank Barbara Squires, Julie Byles and Keryn Curtis for their tireless work organising and coordinating today's program. It means a great deal to us.

So on the back of so many wonderful stories of Dad from work colleagues, we wanted to end with a little on Dad's life and interests outside the office.

It will come as no surprise that Dad was a good student in grade school in Temple City CA. In grade 6 he was asked to write an essay about what he might like to be when he grew up. He wrote:

*'I have what I think is a wonderful dream of the future. After I graduate from High School I want to go to CalTech because it is such a smart school. I will go for learning only and will not go out for sports and will major in science. I will join the Navy before I get drafted so I may pick my job that I want. My dream is to be an aeronautical engineer and work for the service. I am not sure whether I will get married or not.'*

Now, despite avowing not to participate in sports Dad ended up a high-school pole vaulting champion, breaking his high-school record!

And though Dad's academic work was grounded in sociology and urban planning, his insatiable curiosity fed a vast range of interests, from his beloved fishing to music, religion, philosophy, history, politics, travel, sports, cooking and design. We thought it was normal to have discussions about military generals, flamenco guitar or stoicism at the dinner table.

He shared his curiosity and sense of adventure on many trips with Mum to serene Heron Island, the rugged Kimberley, and further afield to Turkey and the rivers of Europe.

But really, nowhere was Dad's passion more evident than in the many beautiful gardens he created in Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney, where we all spent many days toiling away together.

Dad would escape his cerebral working life by getting his hands dirty in the gardens, literally on his hands and knees for hours late into the night, channelling his love of Japanese landscaping into the designs.

And while he delighted in 'grubbing about' in the mud and doing such hard manual labour, I marvelled at how he would take such tender care of the plants and would wince and scowl at me if I broke a single twig!

It really showed how his passion in the garden or at work filtered down from the big picture to the smallest detail.

We are also grateful for Dad's wisdom and support over the years.

Whenever we were having trouble coping or were hurting, Dad could really connect emotionally.

He would zero in calmly, ask questions, and give thoughtful, considered advice. He was not preachy, but would talk about evidence, sometimes his own experience, or more often in the abstract, and give practical help.

In these times he was so good at planning, anticipating and making contingencies.

We will really miss his wisdom.

And what we've heard this morning shows how just as for us family, Dad was forever supporting and encouraging to those around him when the going got tough.

We take great comfort that Dad is now free from pain, at peace and has relief after such a cruel illness.

He was a proud and strong man and fought fiercely for his independence at every step, bravely and stubbornly, resisting walking aids, canes and the wheelchair for as long as possible (as unnerving it was).

And he was writing editorials and articles until just days before his death.

It was remarkable how Dad stayed true to himself even while he slowly became a prisoner to multiple system atrophy as it ate away at his physical and cognitive abilities, and then his dignity.

He truly took on the principles of the stoics while living with such a cruel condition.

His strength and determination over the past few years have been inspirational – and his suffering has reinforced to all of us in the family the importance of choice in how we live our last days.

And through his whole life was a great love story with Mum!

Mum and Dad were high-school sweethearts who've shared a long and loving relationship.

Mum, Dad was so incredibly lucky to have you. Your love and support over the years really laid the foundations for so many of his work successes.

And especially over the last 3 years your patience, love and kindness in caring for him - in what have been such hard times - was just exceptional and a real inspiration to us all.

We kids thank you from the bottom of our hearts and hold you in awe for that.

So with that I'd like to thank you all again for being here today to share, remember and celebrate Dad's life and achievements.