

Eulogy

Brian Frederick Hastings

16 October 2024

23/3/1940 – 8/10/2024

Marueen, Michael, thank you for the opportunity of paying our last respects for Brian, condolences to you both and the wider family.

For those of you who do not know me, I am Lee Robinson, long-time friend and admirer of Brian and of all his pursuits and achievements.

BRIAN FREDERICK HASTINGS;

“Hasto” to his mates, originally from Wellington but a real Cantabrian.

Not only a man of many capabilities, his sport, his work life, his involvement in Charities and not for profits, his interests in Harness Racing, and many other worthwhile interests causes. But on top of that a likeable, humorous and genuinely good fellow. He always greeted you with a smile. Invariably when Marian and I met him at Cricket or social functions he was first to sidle up to Marian and say “are you still with this bloke?”. Always something to smile or be humorous about.

As we have heard, a Wellington boy, a Wellington College pupil, a very good, thorough and respected student who exhibited sporting excellence. We will hear more of that; if it hadn't been Cricket, it would have been as a centre three quarter in the back line of any top-level Rugby team.

Dayle Hadlee will appropriately deal with his outstanding Cricket career.

Brian attended Wellington College from 1953 to 1957, and as well as his Rugby and Cricket prowess, he excelled in the third form as a sprinter; he won the under 13, 100-yard and 75-yard sprints, both in record times.

As a fourth former aged 14-year-old his old school mate, Hugh Perrett, describes him thus;

“In 1954 Brian was in form 4c and was form Captain – an indication of his standing with his classmates. Brian was always a nice natured, naturally friendly guy with a nicely balanced level of self-assurance and confidence. Brian won the class prize for academic achievement in 4c. He again excelled in the athletic sports. He won the under 14, 75-yard from scratch in record equalling time; and the under 14, 100-yards in record time. In the Wellington McEvedy Shield inter-secondary school athletics tournament, Brian won the 100-yard under 14 events in record time.

“In 1955, Brian’s fifth form year, he broke school records in the junior 100, 220 and 440-yard events, winning trophies in the 220 and 440-yards. He also won the junior long jump and Cricket ball throw. He was again in the College’s McEvedy Shield athletics team.

In 1956 he, again, won the class prize. He won the intermediate long jump championship and was second in the 220 yard and 440 intermediate championships event. He was again in the McEvedy team and came second in the intermediate long jump and was in the winning intermediate relay team. The McEvedy trophy was won by Wellington College. To boot, he also won the school senior fives title.”

In 1957, his last year of school he was made a Prefect, was senior long jump champion and again in the Wellington College McEvedy team, won the 4 x 100-yard relay team and broke the record for that event.

Through all his school years, as we shall hear, he excelled to the foremost in his cricket and rugby.

He was a popular, highly regarded and diligent student respected by his peers for all his outstanding abilities; he could fairly be described as that schoolboy prodigy of the time.

In 1957 he left school and worked for Shell; he remained in Wellington for three years and was transferred by Shell to Blenheim, at the time they were a sponsor of New Zealand Cricket. He was there for just over 12 months until he took employment in Christchurch at the Christchurch Press.

Apparently, on the coercion of Dick Brittendon, the well know cricket and sportswriter for The Press at the time, we understand that the inducement included the promise that if Brian played cricket for New Zealand, The Press would guarantee his full salary payment.

Another condition of his employment was that he would need to play for Burnside West as his boss was the wicket keeper in the Senior team.

In 1964 he married Maureen, they produced Michael and Mark, and as we know of course, the late Mark's ability as a sportsman in his own right.

Brian remained in that employ for forty years, working to Assistant Advertising Manager, Advertising Manager and Assistant Manager to The Press itself until his retirement in 2000 after forty years of service.

Not to be done in the working environment, he set up Brian Hastings Sports Equipment and used his many contacts to grow that business, provided advice, and laid tennis courts, cricket wickets and bowling greens to name some. He travelled to Melbourne with the CEO of New Zealand Cricket at the time, Christopher Doig 2001-2002 to provide advice on the new covered stadium on the Docklands in Melbourne and assist with the difficulties they were having in growing turf under the closed roof.

He then worked for some years with his friend and Cricket colleague, Graeme Vivian, (who is sadly overseas and can't be here today), as South Island Manager for Tiger Turf as the last tranche of his working career.

But his sporting life and working career were just part of what he gave and what he did.

He gave back generously to his community; he was a Halberg Trustee for many years and gave time, effort and ideas to those who did not have his good fortune.

He loved his Harness Racing; as well as owning some shares in horses, he joined the Addington Club in 1977. He had some success with the shared ownership of Lethal Rocket, Slasher McKay and Trent

Bridge, the latter which won the Reefton Cup. No guessing where the horses names originated from. Brian organised and was part of a number of racing syndicates and obtained sponsors for races and other Addington Events.

He was a steward at Canterbury Park Trotting Club, in 1981 he was elevated to the committee, in 1984 he became Vice President and in 1987, President. This later role earned him a position on the Addington Raceway Board. He loved the sport, the industry and the camaraderie.

He was one of the founding members and remained a long-time member of the Lancaster Park Club, still a wonderful, well patronised club today.

But he also gave up his time to Charities and not for profits. Not only was he a long term Halberg Trustee but he was director of the Royal Humane Society and various Children's Charities.

Brian Hastings, you were a giver, a provider, an entertainer and a generous man with your talents and your time. You will be fondly remembered for all of these things; it has been a pleasure to have known you, loved and respected you, talked with you, laughed with you and shared some wonderful and happy memories.

Rest in peace. Brian, you should be proud of your 84 years, as we all are, and thank you for sharing many of your special talents and moments with so many of us.

Lee Robinson