

Bio: Bill van Dijk 1936-2011

Bill was born 1936 in the city of Arnhem in the Netherlands, managing to survive the horrors and near starvation of World War 2.

Post war, after completing his tertiary education majoring in Physical Education, he spent the next few years sailing on a Dutch cruise ship as part of the Bursar's staff. Bill's job was to initiate all activities for the passengers - Dutch migrants journeying to Australia to start a new life. The ship returned to the Netherlands as a luxury cruise ship - a type of "Love Boat".

On such a voyage he was offered a job teaching in New Zealand and then in Melbourne. Bill finally accepted an attractive offer of a position in Alice Springs to teach at Alice Springs High School in 1974.

Later he taught in Tennant Creek and in 1989, Nhulunbuy. It was at the end of this year that he was informed of a dream come true, that of establishing a Language Centre in Alice Springs, an idea he had strongly advocated for a number of years. This Centre would alleviate the problem of teaching disparate languages in each of the Central Australian schools and according to which teachers were available. The Alice Springs Language Centre remains viable to this day.

Sport was another of Bill's loves, especially the sport of hockey. From 1974 onwards, following his Dutch heritage, he established this sport, firstly with women's teams and then with men's teams. Competitors travelled throughout the Territory to participate in competitions. He won many awards over the years including NT awards: Volunteer of the Year and Life Membership of the NT Hockey Association, and finally a posthumous award from the Hockey Association. More recently, he was admitted into the Alice Springs Sportsman's Hall of Fame.

One of the most important parts of Bill's life was the Alice Springs Rotary Club. Bill always believed that if you were a member of a service club then you helped provide that service. He volunteered for most of the jobs on the Rotary calendar and one that comes to mind and which Bill strongly supported was the John Hawkins Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to assist Central Australian students attend University.

Additionally, Bill earned his Rotary accolades through his many years of work revitalising Henley-on-Todd Regatta. A world recognised, fun, dry

river bed boat race. He worked both locally and with a national perspective, obtaining major sponsorships, and internationally, by promoting the event in many European countries. He received an invitation to London where the Rotary Club of Staines was trying to simulate the Alice Springs Dry Riverbed Regatta. The river Thames floated calmly by the designated location. A zany but wonderful experience! During these years Bill earned the name of Commodore - a name that remained with him for the rest of his life.

Bill never sought out accolades, they simply came to him. Above all he was just a good human being.