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A TRIBUTE TO "LOU"

Dr. Louis Adhihetty

It is with very deep and overwhelming sadness that I received news of the passing of my dear friend "Lou", whilst I was in Hospital in Adelaide with a severe chest infection. I had great difficulty breathing at the time and the news of Lou's death, which reached my wife Carol via Warrick de Kretszer didn't help my condition much. At the same time it made me frustrated at my own inability to respond quickly and effectively by assuring Lisbeth of our support at this very difficult time. It is with continuing difficulty that I now embark upon a simple tribute to the caring friend that Lou indeed was to me and to all "Wesleyites".

Carol very promptly sent Lisbeth a message expressing our sorrow and our earnest prayers. Now I must, however, with due formality and great sincerity extend our deepest sympathies to Lisbeth, Shakuntala, Arjuna and their respective families and place on record our feelings of grief and despondency, shared by so many Wesleyites, young and old living in Sri Lanka and around the world. We mourn the loss of an outstanding person. A talented sportsman, a man intensely devoted to his family and a caring friend. The impact of Lou's life on all of us is clearly demonstrated by the numerous messages conveyed on the internet alone.

It is true that we cannot share the burden of grief with Lou's family as it will not lessen their very deep and personal feelings of loss. However, we as "Wesleyites" take great comfort by joining together and sharing our thoughts and our memories of Lou. To me there is that momentary easing of pain when I begin to think of the days Lou and Lisbeth spent with us some ten years ago, at our home in Tailem Bend in South Australia. I am sure Lou enjoyed our farm animals, the country solitude and the friends he made in our local community.

Lou and I, both enjoyed the stories and yarns we spun to one another of those magic and exciting days at school.

Lou as we all know, was a talented sportsman and he did well in everything he undertook. He played, Cricket and Hockey and Soccer . He was good at Volley Ball and Badminton. In Athletics he was absolutely outstanding and in terms of athletics a couple of stories come readily to my mind.

First there was the 440 yard relay in the inter-house championships. Lou and I were in Hillard house. I had participated in athletics as a very young lad but I elected to stick to Cricket exclusively. This caused one of the teachers to give me a rather hard time hoping to get me to participate in the School Athletic Meet for Hillard House. It made me more stubborn and as a result I was not seen running as an athlete for several years and until I became the house captain when I felt obliged to help out. In the 440 yard race I received the baton with all the others about 50 yards or more in front of me. I shot out like a bullet doing what would have been a 100 yard dash to overtake some. I soon got pumped out and I began to stride in a daze and when I reached Lou, neck and neck with the front runner. Lou did the rest with customary elegance to earn 3 points for Hillard by coming first.

At that same meet I also represented Hillard in the high jump. I was a short stump but I had a bit of spring in my jump that got me up a fair way. The stage was now set and there were three left. The bar was raised and Hussain (Another magnificent athlete) took the first jump and knocked down the bar. Lou was next and he did the same. I was last in line and I cleared the bar by over 6 inches according to a jubilant Mr C.J. Thamotheram, who insisted that I'd win hands down. Lou and Hussain finally cleared the height and the bar was raised once more. Lou and Hussain cleared the new height with no more than a centimetre to spare. With my first jump my foot hit the bar; with the second I hit it with my waist and in the third I brought it down with my head. I was indeed lucky that I didn't go completely under it. The first on the scene to console me was Lou. With his arm around me he said "" You did well Bryan because you are assured of one point for being third. Lou's words were certainly comforting but it didn't take away the sense of embarrassment. Lou took the honours according to my recollection and Hussain naturally took second place.

In Cricket I had the record at the time of scoring five centuries for Wesley. Not much later Lou equalled that and I was pleased to share the record with him which was finally broken by Danesh Dissanayake. Lou was one of the great all- rounders produce by Wesley. He was an elegant batsman, a bowler who was

comfortable bowling fast or switching to spin and he was a superb fielder in any position.

One thing I could never understand about Lou was his ability at soccer to move his upper body to the right or left and run in the opposite direction to leave his opponent flat-footed. That used to really intrigue me.

It is evident that our lives were closely linked together through sports and our years at Wesley College. The most dominant aspect of our friendship over the years has undoubtedly been Lou's very caring nature. Lou very regularly telephoned me from Switzerland simply to keep in touch and we both kept in touch by letters exchanged quite regularly. Lou's approach towards all "old Boys" of Wesley College was not limited to just a few, because he regularly kept in contact with many, living in many parts of the world

I could go on and on telling stories that Lou and I shared with great joy during our brief meeting in Tailem Bend, ten years ago. It is however time for me to bring this my final tribute to my dear friend Lou to a close with a poem I wrote some years ago titled "A Journey's End" and I'd like to share it with all "Wesleyites".

Death is so universal,
Death, so inevitable.
We like the bright flowers of the field
Must bloom and we must all then yield.

Should we train ourselves to deal
With such loss and not feel?
Do we now search our minds
For answers of more logical kinds?

For the departed we weep.
Should we grieve so very deep?
Is there no faith to shed a tear,
For one that is to us so dear?

There is no faith diminished,
To cry when life is finished.
There was a lesson to be seen
- When "He wept".
The Son of God - The Nazarene.

I end this Tribute to Lou with the words of the Poet Thomas Gray:

“One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath and near his favourite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he.”

Lou, will not be in his usual places from now on. We all as brother's of Wesley College shall dearly miss him and we shall never, ever forget him.

As we all know, Lou was a devout Christian. An ardent and faithful follower of that great teacher of Galilee. We may take great comfort in the knowledge that Lou is now safely in the arms of his Lord and Master.

