

## Terry Pears Eulogy

Thank you for taking the time to come and celebrate the life of Terry Pears. Before I talk about my father, I want to begin by thanking a number of people. The first thank you must go to his wife Marisa with whom he had a happy last fourteen years of his life. They had a wonderful time together, traveling extensively throughout the world, rekindling my Dad's love of Bridge at the Overseas Club and enjoying an active social life at Rotary, the Kent and Canterbury Club and the Hurlingham Club in London. Her daughter Paula, son Mark and their children, Mark, William, Robert, Ted and Charlie, provided my father with a joyous houseful of grandchildren at a time when I was already living in America and my father could only see my children occasionally. I specifically want to recognize Paula who provided such great care and kindness to both my father and Marisa as they both became ill in this last year. She has exhibited compassion and patience as great as anything I have personally seen in my life. In this respect I also want to recognize my sister Julia who spent so much time traveling back and forth to Canterbury from The Netherlands in the last year as my father's health deteriorated and has shown similar characteristics of love, compassion and commitment during a difficult year. Father Michael, who has ministered to Marisa and my father for many years, taking communion to them at home when they could no longer leave the house, must also be acknowledged. Finally, my heart felt thanks and admiration go out to his doctors, nurses and the staff on Brabourne Ward and especially to Paulette and Carmen who cared twenty four hours a day for Marisa and my father in his last few weeks. Angels do walk upon this earth and I have seen them in the people who have cared for my father in this last year. Thank you to you all.

In the immediate aftermath of the death of a loved one, memories are easily filled with the challenges, interactions and experiences with that person in the last few years. But today, I must move beyond the image of the eight one year old man struggling valiantly against leukemia to see the individual whose life was typified by significant achievement, service to others and a remarkable ability to get things done. As I have reflected upon my father's life in the last few days, I am reminded of the words of the American President, Teddy Roosevelt who said *"The credit belongs to him who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement and who, at worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly."* My father was always in the arena, be it the construction industry, arbitration, politics or service to others. He was President of the Master Builders' Association of South Africa, a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and the Chartered Institute of Builders, and a director of Murray and Roberts, the largest construction company in South Africa. In later life he was Chairman of the Canterbury Conservative Party Association and just a few days before his death was made an honorary Alderman of Kent County Council in recognition of his twelve years of service to the Council. Sandy Bruce Lockhart, leader of Kent County Council specifically cited my father's competence, steadiness and loyalty when thanking him for his work as a councilor. Harry Cragg has spoken eloquently of his service to Rotary International.

Terry was also a Mason for a number of years, serving in leadership roles in the Transvaal Grand Mason lodge in South Africa and enjoyed membership of the Pavior lodge in London following our return to the UK. And, finally he was President of the Kent and Canterbury Club, where many of his closest friends were made, many of whom I see before me today and some of who aren't. If there was one man I wanted to have a beer with at my father's wake it was John Sullivan but that is not to be. These are just some of his personal achievements, but probably the greatest memorial to the professional mark he made upon the world stand thousands of miles away from here in South Africa. Sun City, Rand Afrikaans University campus, the Eskom building, Trustbank Building, the South African Broadcasting Corporation headquarters and two Hyperamas are just some examples of the visible and significant construction projects that my father took from groundbreaking to completion. He was even responsible for the Shah's Cavalry Regimental Headquarters in Tehran, though whether that survived the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini I do not know. All I remember from that time are the very large jars of pistachio nuts that came home for which I developed a taste!

It is important that a man's achievements should be recognized and applauded but the essence of a man lies in the daily interactions he had with those around him. As I look out on his friends present today, I know each of us have our own particularly fond memories of Terry. I recognize that my personal recollections and those I have heard from others can give but a faint reflection of who he was, so forgive my omissions and feel free to remedy them at the Kent and Canterbury Club after this. Born a cockney in the East end of London, my father came from a long line of cabinetmakers and carpenters. It was a challenging childhood he faced together with his beloved sister, Jean. They together with my mother Rita and uncle Den lived through the depression of the 1930's and as teenagers experienced the challenges of World War II. Apprenticed as a carpenter he overcame the obstacles of a poor childhood by working a full time job and attending night school to gain his civil engineering degree. Knowing the challenges he faced in obtaining his qualifications always made him value a good education and he ensured that both Julia and I have the best possible schooling that he himself was never able to enjoy. It was in moving to South Africa in 1966 with my mother Rita to work for Murray and Roberts Construction Company that the drive and determination that so exemplified him gave him his finest years. I am indebted to Martin Flash who worked with Tel, as he was then known in those early years, for sharing so many great stories of those days. Of the tales he told me, the ones I can refer to in this venue involved betting on raindrops falling down site office windows, getting nine holes of golf in with Flash, Terry Hinton and Len Chance before working a full day at the office, and dealing with errant bulldozers, Portuguese bricklayers, Zulu work crews, and flying acetylene gas canisters. And amongst all these fun and games, he became known as the man who always got the project done ahead of schedule and below cost.

He was also the go to guy in his life outside the office. Our church in Johannesburg, St. Catherine's, needed a new Sunday school building constructed but lacked the money and experience to get it done. Terry said, leave it to me, and a year later it was done. Saint George's orphanage asked for families to take in young boys for holidays and weekends, so we hosted Caesar Tonkin at our house for a number of years. This commitment to always being the man willing to 'step into the arena' and get the job done continued later in his life as seen in the successful refurbishment of the Rose

Window at St. Mary's Church, Patrixbourne. When my Mother needed someone to sing *Om Henry the eighth I am* to her Nursing Home audiences, my Dad stepped forward with great gusto and belted it out consistently on a weekly basis. And as a county councilor, he told me the best part of the job was during election time, going door to door to meet constituents, saying it was always fun bumping into a vocal labor supporter with whom he could enjoy a friendly argument!

Finally, as a father to Julia and me, he instilled in us the qualities of hard work, willingness to work with all types of people and fearlessness about being the one to step forward and get it done. It is these qualities, directly attributable to our father, that I believe allowed Julia and me to enjoy the success we have each had respectively in distressed investing and energy consulting. So what personal images flash before my eyes as I think of my Dad? Here are a few: holiday camps with the Higgins family, a desire to win any competition he entered, be it mastermind on TV with his son (which he did not always win) or knobbly knee tournaments at Warners (which he did!), trips with him to the Kruger National Park, to Highbury to watch the Gunners, football three and in goal after he got home from work, walking around building sites, and great parties at Linbro Park in South Africa. Best of all, was bidding against Afrikaner farmers, philatelists, real estate agents and car dealers in auctions for livestock, stamps, houses or cars. My Dad would bid on anything if the price was right. When a Dad shows a ten year old how much fun you can have by buying a penny black stamp for a fiver on Saturday night and sell it at the school stamp club for a tenner a week later, you tend to end up sitting on a trading floor when you are twenty two. But what am I most grateful to my father for? It has to be that he instilled in me a strong Christian faith that sustained both him to the end and me today. I have now buried a child at birth, a mother a week before my wedding and a father after a long and full life. As I listened to Ted Loveday read so beautifully from the Book of Wisdom at the requiem mass last night, I was reinforced in my belief that death is an inherent part of the fabric of life and we must all come to terms with it. We should not embrace it, nor trivialize its painful impact upon our lives, but its very presence has led me and my father to acknowledge that life on earth is a god-given privilege and we all must take advantage of that. When we, the living, consider death, too often we think of all the things we would miss, not only in the beauties of this world which we experience every day but in the joys and depth of the relationships we enjoy with each other. But my father and I believe there is more. So, I will end by reading a poem written by a man far younger than my father who lost his life in June 1944:

If I should never see the moon again  
Rising red gold across the harvest field  
Or feel the stinging soft rain  
As the brown earth her treasures yield.

If I should never taste the salt sea spray  
As the ship beats her course across the breeze.  
Or smell the dog-rose and new-mown hay,  
or moss or primroses beneath the tree.

If I should never hear the thrushes wake  
Long before the sunrise in the glimmering dawn.  
Or watch the huge Atlantic rollers break  
Against the rugged cliffs in baffling scorn.

If I have to say good bye to stream and wood,  
To wide ocean and the green clad hill,  
I know that he, who made this world so good  
Has somewhere made a heaven better still.

This bears witness with my latest breath  
Knowing the love of God,  
I fear no death.

Major Malcolm Boyd, killed in action in France, June 1944