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Randall, Mr Donald James

SPEECH

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Speaker Irons, Steve, MP

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Mr IRONS (Swan) (15:10): It is not the first time I have spoken about Don since his death, but I say to Julie, Tess and Elliott, and the rest of the Randall family; and to the many of you who were his staff and his friends, as I said when I spoke about him on a previous occasion, it is very hard to encapsulate the life of Don Randall in 10, 12 minutes. I thank the parliament, because we have heard many stories about Don today and, hopefully, we will have enough time to encapsulate the life of Don, his character, his love of life—the 'lotto life'—and his love for his family. I appreciate the many contributions made by members on both sides of this House to honour our former colleague and friend and to try to give an idea of what he meant to this parliament and to his family.

I know what he meant to his family and I know how much his family meant to him. He was so proud of them. When he played golf, we always used to ask him, 'How did you go at golf?' Recently, he came off the course and he said, 'Don't worry about my score; Elliott had 37 points.' He was happier telling me about Elliott's score than about his own score. But I do thank the parliament for their contributions about Don. I am sure he is sitting up there somewhere watching us and saying, 'Go and have a drink for me; don't worry about speaking about me.' That was the character of the man.

As Ken Wyatt mentioned, just after Don passed away, we caught up and had a toast to Don. Someone who has been mentioned only briefly here is Senator David Johnston, who was the rock for the Randall family, and I spoke to him on a few occasions. The contribution and the efforts that David made in helping to organise things and in being involved with the Randall family after Don's death should also be recognised in this place.

I first knew Don as a person in politics but also as a member of the Royal Perth Golf Club. He joined on 1 November 1999, so it was just a year after I joined. It was a place Don was passionate about. He loved to spend as many hours as he could there and he was looking forward to spending a lot of time there with his son, Elliott, as well. He joined Elliott up in 2005, but Elliott just started playing recently.

When I first came to parliament, Don and David Johnston grabbed me in the first week we were here and we went down to a little restaurant where you used to cook your own meals. It was a great night. We had the wobbly boot on by the end of the night and we all walked back to the Forrest Inn. Somebody spoke about Don being a creature of habit: No. 7 room was always Don's room, every week of sitting. The whole time I have been in parliament, he always had room No. 7. If anybody tried to take it off him, Don would be straight down to reception to let them know that there was someone in his room and they had to go; it was his room. That was just Don, being the creature of habit that he was.

The next day, the first Tuesday I was here, he said, 'Come on, we're going to Timmy's.' I said, 'What are we going to Timmy's for?' and he said, 'You've got to come and meet all my parliamentary mates.' The member for Mackellar, who is in the chamber, was there. There were quite a few of us, and it was referred to as the 'book-burners club'. Unfortunately, I did not get to spend too much time at Timmy's, because after the next election things changed and the Tuesday lunches were no longer allowed to be had.

I just want to reflect on his time at the golf club. As I said, he joined on 1 November 1999. He played regularly with the same group—again a creature of habit. There was the same group of people he played with—Mel Dragicevich, Steve Erceg, John Collins, Danny Murphy and a few others. Don was very proud of being a member at the golf club. He was not what you would call the greatest golfer, but he had passion, as we have heard. He was very passionate about his golf, and as many times as it frustrated him he also had days of glory. The golf club for him as well was a place where both of us could go and not be scrutinised, and it was a bit of a sanctuary—besides our own homes, which were our major sanctuary. Don actually won a trophy in 2006—it was called the Walter Harper Trophy—and he also won a couple of club trophies, but the last one he won was at the Perth International challenge, where they gave away a couple of double passes to the Perth International. That was on 28 September 2013, and if anyone is interested I think there is still a photo on the club's Facebook page about Don winning that. Shortly before that, he also had a 'thought he'd won the golf' day. He brought Julie down to the

club and he got a special bottle of wine out, and unfortunately he was pipped at the post by one of the last cards to come in on that day—but I am sure he still enjoyed the wine! On the day that Don won the trophy, he played in the morning and the trophies were announced at night time, at 6 o'clock. Don actually had gone down to—was it Villa Roma?—his favourite restaurant in Fremantle, and by the time he was rung up and told, 'Don, you need to come back to the club because you might be winning a trophy,' he had to get his daughter Tess to come down and pick him up in Fremantle to bring him back to the club. Don was super excited about winning that trophy, and it was a crowning moment for him; he was so excited that he shouted the bar. He did not realise that amongst his colleagues one of the things that was said about the Royal Perth Golf Club is that it is called 'the working man's royal club', and the working men in that club made sure that they got the best out of Don's shout. I think it cost him nearly \$800 for that shout at the bar that night, but they all made sure that they drank a decent bottle of wine.

We have heard about Don's maiden speech, and one of the things I related to the people I spoke to previously was his love of his family. In that speech, the one paragraph which I picked out—and people have picked out their own—was, 'Last, but certainly not least, I thank my wife Julie and children Tess and Elliott, who were my greatest source of support and comfort during the campaign.' I have described Don as a lovable rogue, and he has also been a fantastic mentor to me and many other people in this place as well. He was a great representative for his constituents in Canning, and no issue was too small for him to look at, as we have heard. Don had that cheeky smile and often tested people with confronting words, while really having a good laugh inside, while he was testing them and winding them up. I know when my wife, Cheryle, first met Don at Perth Airport, I introduced Cheryle to Don and said, 'This is my wife to be.' Don turned around and said, 'Who is paying for the wedding?' The first words Cheryle said to me afterwards were, 'That bloke is a bit strange, isn't he?' I said, 'No, he was just testing you.' Cheryle got to know and love Don, like the rest of us who knew him well.

Don and I often sat down for a bottle of wine to discuss issues of the day and also our brothers-in-arms confrontation with the media. We were both tested at the same time and we often spoke about our joint dislike of the media. On the day that Don passed away, one of the media places rang me and said, 'Would you like to make a pre-recorded message?' I said, 'Unfortunately, no, I won't, because I have not spoken to his family yet and I think they deserve for me to speak to them before I make any public statements.' During that conversation, I mentioned that we did often sit down for a bottle of wine and we had a joint dislike of the media. That particular media person said, 'Well, I guess that was aimed mostly at—a particular media outlet that we will not mention, but I said: 'No, no, do not get it wrong. It was a mutual dislike of all media, not just a particular outlet.' Unfortunately the press gallery are not here to hear me say that.

There were many things about Don—he was always up for it; we heard about the cardboard cut-out. His middle name, as Julie tells me, was 'Front', and he was always up for the battle. He had a great relationship with Clontarf, and we have heard about that, so we do not need to go further into that. He loved his office and I know he loved the staff in his office as well, and he always spoke highly of them and loved the fact that they looked after him as well as he looked after them. They ran protection for him sometimes, as we heard, during the campaign, particularly with the speaker.

He had the seat of Swan and he had the airport there, and there are many people in the airport and in the Perth Airport corporation who have had letters and phone calls from Don about spending time on the tarmac when we got back on Thursday night flights because there were no gates for us to come into. We also heard about his love of wine, and I know Patrick Secker, the former member for Barker, was the brunt of many a pointed barb about Patrick turning up at a restaurant with a bottle of unlabelled wine. Every time we went out for dinner after that, it was always Patrick who was the brunt of Don's messages.

We also heard about the hairdresser. I know that the member for Perth is here. During the 2010 campaign, I know Don and the member for Perth were both running for Canning at that time—and this is one of Don's cheeky statements; and the member for Perth may correct me, but this is my memory of it—it was asked if they shared any common interests at all. Don's retort was, 'We certainly don't share the same hairdresser.' In the face of that, that was Don delivering what he was thinking at that particular time. Again, sometimes it was not appropriate and sometimes it was, but that was just the mirth of the man and how his brain worked.

The Royal Perth Golf Club made a trip to Canberra last year. When I had to leave them for a day, Don took up the opportunity to host them. These 25 people came back to me and told me great stories about Don. Don was supposed to take them up to the dining room for lunch; instead, he organised to get all 25 of them into a barbecue that was being run in one of the courtyards. He got them the best food—the best feed—and free beer and free

everything. They all thought Don was a champion because he had organised getting them in. They said, 'He's a very generous man.' That was their first experience of dealing with Don. As I said, if you get to know him, you get to love him. That is what a lot of us did.

We heard about his new house. I know that he loved his new house. He was living the lotto life. Cheryle and I were lucky enough to have dinner there with him one night. No-one has mentioned Bruno yet, so I had better mention Bruno. Bruno was his British bulldog. I hate to say it, Julie: he is probably one of the ugliest dogs I have ever seen. But he is a fantastic dog, and I know Don loved him dearly. I am sure Bruno misses him as much as the rest of the family do.

The other story I need to relate about Don is his time as a goal umpire. He used to go down and watch Elliott play football. Don used to love going down and goal umpiring. Someone came to me once—because I was involved with the South Perth Junior Football Club at a coaching level—and said, 'We've got a bit of trouble going on.' I said, 'What's that?' He said, 'Well, Don is the goal umpire but we think there is something wrong with his eyesight.' I said, 'Why is that?' He said: 'There was a ball that missed. It went through the points, and it was that far out but Don still gave it as a goal.' I said, 'Why do you think that was?' And they said, 'His son kicked the ball.' I said, 'Well, you have to forgive one-eyedness sometimes.' I know Don would have done anything to make sure that Elliott had a great time and got a great goal, whether it was there or not. That was the legacy of the man. He also wanted to look after his son and boast about his son's achievements.

One of the things that has not been talked about either is Don's commitment to franchisees. One of the first things that I did when I came into parliament was work with Don in supporting the franchisees and franchisers. Jo Gash was also supporting them. I think some of the important changes that have been made for franchisees and franchisers across Australia were because of the work that Don did. He did a fantastic job. It was his passion for and his commitment to those areas that indicated to me that he was a man who would have done anything for his constituents and for his family.

In closing, I welcome the opportunity to talk about Don. He was a mentor to me, and I guess I felt at times a bit like an older brother to him. There were other times—and I cannot forget to mention this—when we went to functions in Parliament House. He would always ring me up and say: 'I'm going to this fabulous function. You should come along and meet all these people. They are going to have some really good food and really good wine on.' You knew the ones where he did not like the wine, because he would not ring, but I might run into him at them. Don must have lost a bit of weight, because at one stage I saw him at a couple of functions where he had his own select bottle of wine in his pocket. He would bring it from his office and pour his own drinks. That was his love of wine and his love of life.

He will be sorely missed by this parliament. He will be sorely missed by his family and his friends—the cheekiness, the 'upfrontness' and the man he was. For all those who have made contributions and who are going to make contributions, I am sure Don will be up there saying: 'Thank you for that. Thanks mates. Let's have a drink.' To the Randall family: I wish there was more I could say about my dear friend. I am sure that you will miss him dearly. If there is anything this parliament or this Liberal Party or any of his colleagues can do for you, do not ever hesitate to contact us—we would love to do it, and we love you all. Thank you.