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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONDOLENCES

Parer, Hon. Warwick Raymond, AM

SPEECH

Wednesday, 19 March 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Page 2567
Questioner
Speaker Ciobo, Steven, MP

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Mr CIOBO (Moncrieff—Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer) (11:57): I rise to say some words in memory of Warwick Parer. He was in many respects an influence on me, from my time as president of the Queensland Young Liberal movement and my time as a Young Liberal in Queensland. He was a man whose shadow, in a political sense, I grew up in. He was a man who had very strong connections not only to the Gold Coast but, through the Liberal Party, to many of my contemporaries. In particular, I acknowledge the fact that Warwick Parer replaced my predecessor, Kathy Martin Sullivan, who in 1984 stood for the seat of Moncrieff, thereby creating the Senate vacancy that Senator Parer subsequently filled in 1985. I also note that upon his retirement in February 2000 his vacancy was filled by a good friend of mine, the current Attorney-General, Senator George Brandis.

Warwick Parer, especially but not solely in his capacity as President of the Liberal Party, throughout the time of his very active involvement with and stewardship of the Liberal Party, was a person with whom I had the opportunity on many occasions to break bread and to discuss issues of the day, particularly, of course, political issues of the day. Warwick had a most magnificent holiday residence on the Gold Coast, in my electorate. It was a small place, the name of which escapes me but which I know is French, at Budds Beach, which is a favourite haunt of my wife, our family and mine. We would frequently find ourselves down there at a small cafe named Bumbles Cafe, at Budds Beach, and see Warwick tottering across the road to get his morning coffee, which he was partial to, whenever he and Kathi were staying on the Gold Coast. There were many occasions on which, by sheer coincidence, an opportunity arose for Warwick and me to discuss all manner of political issues and contemporary issues of the day at Bumbles Cafe.

In many respects that for me is the focal point of my relationship with Warwick Parer, because although in a formal sense there was our relationship through the Liberal Party, it was his mentoring to a certain extent through those conversations—and there were many—at Budds Beach, on the Gold Coast, that helped to shape my view of the man and helped to deepen my understanding of him.

He was in my estimation an erstwhile gentleman and a man of tremendous character and good humour. But he was a man who had a clear-eyed resolve when it came to what was needed for the Queensland Liberal Party. In many respects, Warwick Parer put in play and helped to facilitate the Liberal Party merger with the National Party, which created the LNP. That in many respects helped to land a victory, through what was a period of much tumult around what was going to happen the contemporary Queensland Liberal Party. It helped to land the very significant win that was achieved by the LNP at the state election.

I have a very good relationship with one of Warwick's seven children, Justin Parer. He was a contemporary of mine in the Queensland Young Liberals. He is a man who has gone on to leave an impression in business in Queensland, as did his father.

Warwick Parer's contribution to the Gold Coast cannot be understated. He was a man who, through his time as a senator for Queensland, played an incredibly important role. I think he was born in Papua New Guinea. He attended Nudgee College. Those are great foundations. Some would worry about someone born in Papua New Guinea, but he is certainly someone who excelled throughout the time of his involvement in the Senate and in the Liberal Party.

I want to acknowledge and honour Warwick Parer. He will remain a great man. Through his family, he has left his imprint not only on Queensland but also on Queensland politics. On a very personal level, to Kathi and his children I thank you for lending us Warwick Parer. Anyone who is involved in politics and has children, let alone seven children, recognises the incredible sacrifice made by family. For Warwick Parer to have achieved what he did, rising as a cabinet minister for resources and energy in the Howard government, and who was a senator from 1985 through until 2000, it really is in many respects the family that does the heavy lifting, with the frequent absences. As a father of two children I can only imagine the heavy lifting that Kathi had to do as a

mother of seven children. To Kathi and the rest of Warwick's family, thank you for lending us Warwick Parer. His contribution was significant. He helped to shape me into the politician that I am today and he helped to shape generations of Young Liberals who mixed with Justin and also those who knew Warwick from his time as both a senator and as a president. I honour and acknowledge Warwick Parer and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to get to know him over the years.