

## 1.

Andrew David Halsted Stewart was born in Perth on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1942.

The son of Andrew and Noel Stewart and older brother of Donald.

David's father was a reader of agriculture at the University of WA and his mother was an author and talented journalist with The West Australian Newspaper.

When we think of David we remember his musical talent, his academic ability and his professional career, his linguistic skills and his impressive knowledge across a wide range of subjects.

However there was an intrepid side to David's nature.

As a young boy he once jumped off the roof of the garage with only an umbrella to break his fall. The umbrella collapsed but fortunately David was not hurt.

This story, says a lot to me about David's approach to life. I would not say that he was a risk taker but he certainly lived life to the full.

He was a pilot, a scuba diver, a cross country and black slope skier, he ran a marathon, travelled across India and through the Khyber Pass at a time when local tribesmen, as a matter of sport, would take pot shots at any traveller that dared pass through their territory. On his way from India to Europe he made friends with the Bedouins. He travelled in a carriage with the peasants and their livestock on the Trans Siberian Railway across the emptiness of Russia well before it became a recognised way of travel.

## 2.

Perhaps it was the genes he inherited from his grandfather who in an effort to overcome depression had literally walked the length of Africa.

It also explains his love of Queenstown and why he spent so much of his spare time there. The ruggedness and the beauty appealed to him and exhilarated him. He loved the skiing, the trekking and the lakes. He was in awe of the local pilots and their skill in flying in such dangerous conditions.

The Stewart family lived in Crawley and David, as he was known to his school friends, attended the local primary school in Nedlands.

At 2 years of age David showed a great interest in music and would often be found tinkering on the family piano. By the time he was 3 or 4 he had composed his first melody.

David's persistence and discipline, together with his talent and the fact that he had perfect pitch, were rewarded when at the age of 10 years he was awarded an Australian Music Examination Board Gold Medal for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade piano.

By the age of 12 years David had completed all available exams for the piano and his teacher, Miss Roberts, decided that for David to further his musical career he should study under Madam Carard, one of the most renowned pianists in Perth at the time.

### 3.

Under the tutelage of Madam Carard, David was highly commended by the judges in the state finals of the ABC Instrumental and Vocal Competition in 1961, 1964 and 1965.

He later went on to become a member of the National Board of Musica Viva Australia from its inception in 1981 through to 1997.

President of the WA Branch of Musica Viva from 1983 to 1997

Member of the Board of the WA Academy of Performing Arts 1992 to 1997

And Chairman of the advisory Committee of the WA Conservatorium of Music 1993 to 1997

David completed his education at Christ Church Grammar School, where he involved himself in all activities of the schools music department, including a role in The Pirates of Penzance and as the Lord High Executioner in the Mikado.

Whilst at UWA David boarded at St Georges College with his old school friend Alan Eggleston who was also studying medicine.

After completing his degree David made his way to India where he visited the Madras Eye Clinic and was so taken by the difference that eye surgery could make to people's lives that he decided there and then that ophthalmology would be his chosen career. David gradually made his way across the continent, via the Khyber Pass, to the Middle East and finally to Germany where he found employment with the Canadian Air Force.

#### 4.

This was a great time in David's life.

He enjoyed the camaraderie and social life, learnt German and became a very competent skier. At one time he was very keen to see the opera so he arranged to hitch a return flight to Rome, in a F1 11 fighter jet.

Maybe this is where he developed his love of flying.

David completed his FRCS in Ophthalmology at Edinburgh University and then worked at The Croydon Eye Unit for two years where he learnt Cataract Surgery. It was at this time that he bought a 13 year old Bentley the first of three vintage cars the other two being Rolls Royces.

On his return to Perth he set up practice in Subiaco.

When he operated on an aboriginal lady it was the first time in Perth that anyone had performed cataract surgery.

David subsequently took over from Prof Ida Mann at the Busselton Eye Clinic. Once a month David would drive out to Jandakot with his dog, load up the plane and the dog would jump into the seat behind him. This routine was kept up for many years and with each of his subsequent kelpies. The regular trips to Busselton helped David keep up his flying hours and at the same time keep an eye on his farm where he was breeding buffalo.

Each year the Gurkha regiment in Singapore would send one of their members down to Busselton to choose one of David's buffalo calves to be ceremonially slaughtered for their annual dinner. It was a very important selection process as the calf had to be just the right size so

## 5.

the swordsman would kill it with a single blow. Failure to do so meant great loss of face. They only made the wrong choice once.

After he completed his Bronze Medallion, North Cottesloe Surf Club became a very important part of David's life. He took part in beach patrols on the weekend, paddled his ski, became a regular early morning visitor to the gym and in so doing became very fit.

David's sense of humour was never far below the surface and I remember some years ago when we both happened to be in London at the same time we decided to go to an exhibition of Monet's paintings at the National Gallery. There were long queues and when we eventually got to the ticket office David asked the lady at the counter the cost of entry. She replied that it was 20pds, the equivalent of \$50, which was a lot of money in those days. David looked somewhat taken aback and asked if there was a discount for the disabled. The young lady looked at us in a bemused fashion and asked David what he meant. With a perfectly straight face he replied "Well we are Australians"!! The ticket lady laughed, along with all the other people around us, and promptly gave us 10% discount.

When Michael and Josephine were getting married, it was decided to have the reception at David's home and to use one of his Rollers as the wedding car. David arranged for a large marquee to be set up in the garden, in front of the garage. Things were going along splendidly, until sometime later, David realised that the car was still in the garage and the marquee had to be taken down so that Josephine could be driven to the church.

## 6.

David had many achievements during his professional career and undoubtedly the highlight was his term as President of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmology 2006 -2007.

With his very busy schedule he still had time to learn Russian, visit his home in Queenstown on a regular basis and enjoy the fellowship of his club.

Lunch or coffee with David always included stimulating conversation, with David holding forth with great knowledge and insight on any number of subjects.

David had a dry wit and would love to rib you if he thought that it was deserved, but it was always with a grin and without maliciousness of any kind. He had very firm opinions, tending well to the right of the political spectrum, I must say, and he did not tolerate any kind of political correctness.

Tuesday lunch for David was always a 3 – course meal, soup then the main course followed by dessert. Oh yes with an extra scoop of ice cream if you don't mind. Quite often there was also a glass of wine to finish off.

David had a healthy appetite and when he was working at the eye surgery foundation, Helen Smith, who had run her own catering business and was a very accomplished cook, always made sure there was a good supply of her Afghan biscuits for David and it was not unknown for him to polish off six or so during the morning session.

7.

Helen, a great friend and colleague, remembers David's absolute dedication to Ophthalmology and to the Eye Surgery Foundation, of which he was one of the founding members.

He will be sadly missed at lunch on Tuesday and at coffee, after his morning workout with his friends, at North Cott.

I cannot let this time pass without paying a particular tribute to David's children, Venetia and Michael. Their unswerving dedication to David in his hour of need has been absolutely amazing. They put their lives on hold and travelled to Christchurch, week about, for months. Their love for their father was inspirational. I have no doubt that their presence was what got David through those first agonising months.

A wonderful intellect and marvellous musical talent, a kind and generous employer and good friend. A man of principle who served his profession and those around him so well, with compassion and sincere dedication.

But with all his achievements the thing that David was proudest of was his two children, Venetia and Michael.

God Bless him.