

VALE NIGEL CREW : 2 AUGUST 1940 - 10 JULY 2013

Canberra, and in particular the local athletics community, lost one of its real personalities last week with the passing of 73 year old Nigel Crew. Nigel had worked in the Government Printing Office for 30 years before retiring but he had been in poor health for some time and had spent his last couple of years in a nursing home.

His daughter Francine gave the eulogy at his funeral on Monday to a large gathering of family and friends. There was mention of his racewalking connections and Francine mentioned about Nigel's attempt to start a new fashion in racing shorts - rather than letting them trail on the ground he hoisted them up way too high!

Nigel became interested in athletics in the early to mid 1960's, at which time he joined the North Canberra Athletics Club. His long time passion from that point became race walking. As a competitor, while he could not achieve representative honours, he hardly missed a competition whether it was local or interstate and in his early years was a much required "driver" to many out of town competitions.

He was one of the competitors in the inaugural Lake Burley Griffin 20 Mile walk in Canberra - the year was 1967 and he is captured for posterity on the far right of the photo below.



He was a founding member of the ACT Race Walking Club formed in March 1965, primarily to provide race walking competitions in the winter months but then also providing additional weekly races in the summer. He was also a founding member of the ACT Veterans Athletics Club.

He served on the committee of many clubs and at various times performed the duties of secretary, treasurer and race secretary of the ACT Race Walking Club. He was a Life Member of North Canberra Gungahlin Athletics Club, the ACT Race & Fitness Walking Club and a recipient of a 25 year Merit Award for services to Racewalking Australia.

Denis Strangman reminded me this morning in an email how Nigel, Peter Waddell and Robin Whyte were continually ribbing each other. If Peter was too sharp Nigel would reply in kind. He remembered one occasion where Peter, who always used to submit Saturday's results to the Canberra Times, mischievously recorded Nigel's race result as "still coming" - meaning to say he had not yet finished - and the journalist, in all innocence, reprinted it in the paper!

Apart from being a committed participant in race walking events Nigel also undertook coaching of young athletes. His most successful walker was Daniel Andrikis who he took from being red carded by all judges in an interstate carnival to being an Australian Representative at the World Junior Championships.

Nigel will be remembered by many Canberra residents for his persistence in claiming his place on the road when out training despite the introduction of shared paths! He will also be remembered by me for his distinctive apparel - regardless of the cold weather at the LBG carnival (and it was often below 0°C), he was always to be seen in his short sleeved shirt and shorts.

Nigel, we will all miss you.

Tim Erickson
Tuesday 16 July 2013