VALE COLIN SILCOCK-DELANEY … 1932-2026

The following obituary was published by VRWC President Stuart Cooper on Tuesday 3rd November 2026.

While officials were waiting for competition to commence at Aberfeldie last Saturday, the sad news came through of the passing of **Colin Silcock-Delaney**, one of the revered personages among the Victorian and Australian Masters athletics community, at age 94.

Colin was no stranger to walking races conducted by the VRWC, specifically Masters championships on the road and track. As with many who grew up in the early to middle decades of the 20th century, his was a life of childhood hardship and isolation, but also one of life lessons, skill acquisition and fulfillment through, among other things, sport.





Colin racing in VMA championships at Middle Park and Mentone … and celebrating another medal win.

Heather Carr wrote the following excellent tribute to Colin, which is published on the VRWC website having originally appeared in the Victorian Masters Association newsletter *'Footprints':*

Colin Silcock-Delaney is an interesting and remarkable man. Colin's life story demonstrates success in achieving a lifestyle many of us would envy despite insurmountable, overwhelming odds. Colin did not experience a traditional family life; a lifestyle that many of us believe is the cornerstone leading to a pathway that regularly results in accomplishments, achievements and rewards.

Colin was born at the Royal Womens Hospital in 1933, to a single mother. At this time, bearing an illegitimate child was a social taboo. During this era if his mother had tried to raise him, she would have been cast as a social pariah. So, Colin was placed in the St. Josephs Babies Home in Broadmeadows, founded and run by Mary McKillop who founded the 'Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart', a congregation of religious sisters which established a number of schools and welfare institutions throughout Australia with an emphasis on education. Mary McKillop is the only Australian thus far to be recognised by the Catholic Church as a Saint.

On becoming a toddler, Colin was sent to St.Anthony's Babies Home in Kew, and then at age seven his home became St. Joseph's Home in Surrey Hills. For his secondary schooling, in 1943, aged eleven he lived at St. Augustines Boys Home, an orphanage in Highton, Geelong, which housed over three hundred boys. In 1949 at sixteen, he was sent to work as an apprentice grocer in Morwell. Colin lasted at this occupation for six - seven months. Following this beginning of working life, Colin was sent to Warrnambool and worked in the Warrnambool Woollen Mills for twelve months. He lived with the family who cared for him previously over the school holidays. At seventeen - eighteen he became independent and lived in a Geelong boarding house. whilst working for a bakery as a bread carter driving a small van delivering bread.

From 1954 to 1956, Colin was recruited for National Service at Puckapunyal. The training was intense, and this ignited Colin's interest in running. In 1958, Colin became involved with the Geelong West Country Fire Authority [CFA], as a volunteer and he also became a runner with the hydrant and wheel, a CFA exercise. He contributed over 35 years' service to the CFA; other clubs he joined at this time were the Manifold Cricket Club, the Manifold Tennis Club, St. Joseph's Junior Football Under 18 Club, supporting his son's recreational football. Colin was also made a life member of St. Joseph's Football Club. It was at this time in his life he met Nellie Briely. with whom he fell in love, and they married in November 1958. They moved into a flat, and saved hard to buy a block of land. Colin built a home for his

family and together Nellie and Colin welcomed Maria, who was born in December 1959. Maria was followed by Mark, 1961, Kelly 1963, Colleen 1964 and they adopted Paul in 1969.

For 10 years, Colin drove taxi's part time. Then he bought his own taxi, with Geelong Radio Cabs, his licence at that time cost him $20,000. Colin drove taxis for 50 years, meeting and interacting with all types and variety of people. A sad time in Colin's life was when he split with Nellie. Colin continues to have a very close relationship with his children, and he is still very devoted to Nellie.



Colin (443) in action at the World Masters championships in 2018 … at age 85.

World Athletic Championships that Colin has attended.

1979 Hanover
1981 Christchurch
1983 Puerto Rico
1987 Melbourne
1989 Eugene
1991 Turku
1993 Miyazaki
1995 Buffalo
1999 Gateshead
2001 Brisbane
2005 San Sebastian
2013 Porto Alegre (N.B. 'This will be my last International Masters Games' [Direct quote from Colin!]

Oceania Games

Fiji, Western Samoa, Norfolk island, Tahiti, Rarotonga, Hastings, N.Z., Townsville and Canberra.

Colin proudly announces that he has been to every Victorian and Australian Masters event since their inception. Colin also claims being a foundation member of Geelong Cross Country which began in 1971. Colin also competed in and won his first marathon in 1978 in the time of 2 hours 51 minutes; he ran three marathons over three years. Colin left Geelong Cross Country Club and started St Josephs Athletic Club, this club also making him a life member. To add to his accolades, Colin has also become a life member of St Josephs College.

Colin trained hundreds of boys over a period of thirty years, predominately during his lunchtimes, without receiving any payment. He also officiated at many athletic competitions and events, all without asking for a cent. This altruism is indeed a quality that 'endears' us to Colin. He asks for nothing, and has given so much to others in return. At the recent XX World Athletic Championships held in Porto Alegre, Colin won silver medals for Australia in both the 5km track walk, and in the 10km road walk.

Colin believes he has been very fortunate in that he remained relatively injury free during his sporting career. He does however have some health issues, but without fail, he continually overcomes these and we see him at many, many Masters events. As Colin states, these health issues may restrict him from travelling overseas in the future.

On a happy note, Colin, he found his parents in 1979 - he had been searching for over forty years. He found his mother, and learnt that his father [who had died sadly before Colin located him] had been a champion runner, footballer, cyclist. His father won many accolades whilst an athlete. Colin now resides along the Great Ocean Road at Port Campbell where he magnanimously invites anyone in the area to stay; he is a very welcoming, kind hearted, friendly individual who has made his mark on the world despite many injustices along the way. There will be eventually a special spot in heaven reserved for Colin.

Funeral of
Mr Colin Joseph Silcock-Delaney
Friday 13 November at 11.00am
at
Basilica of St Mary of the Angels, Geelong

Stuart Cooper
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