



**NORTHERN TERRITORY
of AUSTRALIA**

THE OPPOSITION

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Member for Daly

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HANSARD EXTRACT

SPEECH

Tribute to Mr Ted Dunstan

(Thursday, 14 February 2019)

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Delivered in the Legislative Assembly Chamber

PARLIAMENT HOUSE, MITCHELL STREET, DARWIN N.T. 0800

Mrs FINOCCHIARO (Spillett): Mr Deputy Speaker, tonight I pay tribute to Edwin Dunstan and I do so knowing that whatever I say here will be totally inadequate as a tribute to the man we know as Ted.

Ted was larger than life. He was a passionate advocate, a prolific writer and a true Territorian. He was a man who cared deeply about issues and articulated what many of us thought, although sometimes we had to agree to disagree.

You all know Ted or you know of him. He lived for more than 60 years in a wheelchair, the result of a terrible accident when he had just turned 18. The accident was the subject of a profile piece in the Northern Territory News in 2002. In typical Ted style he opened up to the newspaper about the vehicle accident which caused his quadriplegia in the hope that it would help promote safe driving over the Christmas period.

It should be noted that according to the NT News article, Ted was not the driver involved in his accident. He was a pedestrian hit by a speeding reckless driver and thrown several metres. His passion for advocating for safer roads continued throughout his entire life. Just before he passed away last year, in one of Ted's letters to the editor which he sent to our office, he put the case for more action on road safety. He said:

There is little point to continually beg for care in driving with all factors of

impending tragedy involved. The road safety suite must ramp up.

I am sure you will all agree, Ted was so much more than his disability. He was an inspiration, a lawyer, a PhD, a father, a husband, a political candidate, a letter writer, an activist, a friend and a Territorian to his core. Ted's achievements were many. He graduated in 1973 with a Bachelor of Laws and was admitted to the Supreme Court of South Australia. He was a legal advisor in Fiji and Vanuatu and ran his own law firm for many years in the Northern Territory. He completed his PhD through Charles Darwin University. Ted stood proudly as a Country Liberal Party candidate for Nightcliff in 2016 and was chair of Neighbourhood Watch NT.

As acknowledged by Integrated disability Action Incorporated, it was his advocating for disability services that Ted will be best remembered. In their tribute, the IDA said:

With the introduction of the NDIS, Ted continued to hold the NT government accountable and campaign for the rights of people with a disability. Ted will be sadly missed by all who came into contact with him from within the community and disability sector.

Ted's determined spirit was reflected in a short yarn from his brother-in-law, Doug, in the eulogy at Ted's funeral. I quote:

He and Betty, Ted's first wife, also purchased a Chevrolet Bel Air and with hand controls, Ted was licensed

to drive this very large and powerful vehicle. Needless to say, I was not very comfortable driving with him. I cannot say he had a lead foot because he could not use his foot but the hand controlling the accelerator and break must have had a lot of lead in them.

Doug's tribute was moving. In reference to Ted's challenges, he said:

Despite these difficulties, Ted gave of his time willingly whether it was as a JP signing forms at the Karama Shopping Centre, writing insightful letters to the NT News, giving advice to the CLP and contesting a seat in the recent Northern Territory elections. He did not say "it is just too hard" as many of us would, but the harder the challenge the more he applied himself.

During his time as a candidate for the CLP, Ted threw himself energetically into the campaign lobbying the then government fiercely on behalf of the people of Nightcliff. His campaign manager, Shane Nouwens, shared some of Ted's achievements in the role including: successfully lobbying the government to announce the redevelopment of John Stokes Square; successfully kept the media focused on law and order issues in the electorate and police then formed their social order unit; the regeneration of the Return to Country program through lobbying the former government for new funding for the program; and a successful submission to government delivery of new Nightcliff cricket nets.

A great tribute to Ted was written by Sky News correspondent and NT News columnist, Matt Cunningham. As Matt said in his column:

We could all learn something from Ted Dunstan. Most importantly, to live life to the absolute fullest. Ted Dunstan vowed not to waste a second of life and there is a lesson in that for all of us.

Ted is survived by his wife Vicky; sister, Christine; brother-in-law, Doug; and his two children, Simon and Phillipa. To them we send our sympathies and our thanks, for sharing this wonderful man with all of us.

Rest in peace, Ted.