

A teacher who taught by example

LESLIE EDWIN STONE, the inaugural Mayor of the Rural City of Wodonga, is dead.

This is a sad day for his family, his friends, his city and the people of the district he loved.

For Les Stone, in public and in private life, was a man of the people. He lived life fully and closely with them. He worked with them, relaxed with them and laughed with them. He shared their problems. And he served them — and served them well.

Les Stone was not born and bred a Border district man. He became one by choice.

Schoolteaching was his calling and, as in everything, he applied himself and made his mark. But Les Stone believed he could, and should, do more. He became a public servant in the broadest sense.

He will best be remembered by most of us for the part he played in local government: first with the Shire of Wodonga and then, following the elevation of the municipality to city status, with the new rural city.

Les Stone acquitted himself on the public platform with distinction. His leadership was imaginative. He was a fair and impartial chairman. His values were sound and his judgment was beyond reproach.

And he had those rare qualities: candor and integrity.

In his years as Mayor he wore the robes of office with a simple dignity and pride. It was not the personal pride of vanity, but the pride of a man proud to lead his people.

Les Stone knew the agony that is cancer. He saw it out stoically. For some time after doctors had told him the tragic truth he continued to receive ratepayers at his hospital bed. They pressed him with their problems, often until late at night.

They didn't, of course, know what Les Stone knew. But he never complained of his problem. He didn't even mention it.

Such was the measure of the man.

Les Stone has gone. Those who knew him, or knew of him, will remember him as the teacher — the teacher who taught by example.