

Thank you Julie for giving me the opportunity, on behalf of all State Bank Footy Club members, to farewell Wizza and to thank him for all that he did for our club.

When I say Wizza, I mean the team, Wizza and Julie. While Wizza was busily working over here, Julie was busily working somewhere else. They were so energetic and made it look so easy.

My first recollections of them was in 1963 at the cold and wind swept Brighton Beach oval, with the tent pitched at the end of the rooms; Julie and her team mates feeding the masses and boosting the clubs' coffers.

All the time Wizza would be quietly going about his work: team sheets, footballs, umpires, etc.

If we didn't have a boundary umpire, he would do it; sometimes for both games. Viv Francis has reminded me that Wizza also took the field in the reserves if they were short. Organized as ever! He always had his footy gear in the car, just in case. Viv can't remember if he ever troubled the statisticians for the number of possessions he might have had, or if he featured in the Best & Fairest votes at the end of the season. However, he was always part of the team.

In The Amateur competition, if a club made a mistake; say the team sheet not in strict alpha order, or the scores phoned in late, it was fined. These fines were published in the weekly Amateur Footballer. The State Bank was never mentioned during Wizza's 16 years as Secretary. I am pretty sure that those who followed him upheld the tradition.

Some of my fondest memories were in the rooms after a Saturday match at Oval 4. Many of us would kick on around the bar with the record player going. Once Julie had bathed the kids in the tin tub on Ted's rub down table and put them to sleep in the car outside the door, it was on. A huge feature of these nights was when Wizza and Julie got going with their rock n roll routine. The rest of us just stood back and gaped. They were good. No video unfortunately!

When we'd all had enough, or perhaps more than enough, we'd do an emu bob to clean the floor, and load the week's empty bottles onto the roof rack on Wizza's car, who gave them to the local scouts. Wizza and Julie would spend the night at Julie's mum's in Middle Park, so the bottles went home in broad daylight on Sunday.

I'm reminded by Readie and Noel Ebery of the dirty jumpers being loaded into the panel van on Saturday night and magically returning washed and folded ready for us the next week, including their numbers 3 and 4.

I must mention the wonderful relationship that The Club had with the State Bank. The support that we received from The Bank was the envy of other sporting clubs that we came in contact with.

The general manager regularly attended our home matches at Oval 4. Any sick leave related to a footy injury went unrecorded. Relievers were exempt from bush trips during the season so that we could get to training. And of course that special Monday off to attend our footy trips. The very generous Bank sponsorship continued until the State Bank was no more.

The footy club and The Bank meant so much to all of us with so many lasting friendships amongst former team and work mates. Some examples are Pittsie's pizza nights and annual "All Australian Team" trip to the Sunshine Coast; the regular lunches at the Royal Melbourne Hotel in Bourke St; The Retired Officers picnics, and the many smaller groups who never let the flame die.

I should also mention David White and his numerous popular posts on the State Bank Facebook site

We knew that the time was coming when we'd farewell Wizza, but didn't expect it so soon.

Wizza, mate we all love you and will miss you dearly.

Apologies: Noel Ebery. Alan Pitts. Kev Safford