

Celebration of the Life of Neville Evans - 12th June 2025

Speeches will begin at 2.30 p.m.

At 2.25 announce:

- We will be beginning the speeches in 5 minutes,
- Please make sure you have a drink and find somewhere to sit.
- The bar will be closed during the speeches and will re-open once they are concluded.

Introduction at 2.30 p.m.

Good afternoon, everyone.

My name is Bruce Bower. I knew Neville for 34 years and was very close mates with him over the past 20 years. I am honoured to have been asked to assist with the Celebration of Neville's life today.

On behalf of Neville's wife Trish, may I welcome you here to Chirnside Park Country Club today, a place that was very dear to Neville's heart.

Trish, Andrea and their family would also like to thank you all for coming here to share this day with her.

A special thanks also to those of you who have travelled from Interstate and regional Victoria to be here. It means a lot to her.

I am going to give you a brief account of Neville's early days before handing over to his daughter, Andrea, who will talk about her special relationship with her dad.

I will then invite his close friend from his days at the State Bank and his footy days, Stuart Allen, to relive some of the memories of their years working and playing together.

Following Stewart's words, I will conclude with some of my recollections of playing golf with Nev and the many great times we shared together.

So, I hope you are comfortable!

Neville was born on the 20th November, 1949 in the Lilydale Bush Nursing Hospital and was the second of four children to parents Neil and Merle. He passed away in the early hours of Tuesday 3rd of June, aged 75, after being diagnosed with brain cancer last October.

Neville had 2 brothers: Allan and Ian and a sister Lorraine.

Sadly, Ian passed away a number of years ago, but Allan and Lorraine are with us here today. Our thoughts are with both of you today on the passing of Neville. I am sure you have many fond memories of your early years spent with him.

Neville lived his early days in Montrose before shifting to Heatherdale Road, Ringwood from where he attended Ringwood Primary School.

In the early 1960's his father, a policeman, took up a posting to Donald, a farming town on the Richardson River in North-Central Victoria, about 275 kms from Melbourne.

Neville started his Secondary Schooling at Donald High School and then briefly went to Emerald High School before returning to Donald to complete his Matriculation in 1967. In his final year he was appointed as the school's Head Prefect.

As with most Country towns, sport played a big part in local folklore and Neville excelled in both football and tennis representing the town in the North Central Football League.

Neville's first part time job was in the Historic Donald Post Office, which opened in 1870, before he began as a teller in the State Bank's branch in Melbourne. He didn't really like city life so he returned to Donald 6 months later to work in the local branch of the bank.

Promotion opportunities in Donald were pretty scarce, so in 1971 he transferred back to the Bank's head office in Melbourne as an accountant where he worked for the next 36 years. He was successfully promoted into many managerial positions finishing up in charge of Personal Debt Recovery when the Commonwealth and State Banks combined. He retired in 2007.

Nev first met the love of his life, Trish, one evening in January 1975, at the Faulkner Club and was smitten by her. Trish was at first a bit ambivalent towards Nev and deliberately gave him the wrong phone number that night. However, Nev was not to be deterred and pulled a few strings to get her correct number, phoned her up and asked her out on a date. Trish succumbed to his charms, went out with him and the rest is history.

They were married in October 1976, so Nev was a pretty-slick operator! Straight away they purchased their first house in Croydon before building their new home in Chirnside Park in 1980.

Their son Scott was born in 1982 followed by their daughter, Andrea, in 1985. They have four grandchildren: Callah, Halle, Harper and Noah.

Nev was a very proud grandfather and the grand kids brought out the softer side of him.

Nev had many achievements during his years in Donald and with the bank. He was a member of the Donald CFA and worked fervently to raise funds for the Royal Children's Hospital, driving the fire truck from Donald to Melbourne each year, stopping at many small towns along the way to fund raise. Because of his efforts year-after-year he was awarded Life Membership of the Royal Children's Hospital.

Nev also was awarded Life membership of the Prahran Football Club after they amalgamated with the State Bank Amateur team which Nev Captain-Coached for a number of years.

I think anybody who knew Nev would not be surprised by these accolades.

Although he sometimes presented as a crusty old bugger, with his bluntness, stubbornness and love of an argument, he had a heart of gold and was the first one to roll up his sleeves and help-out when a job needed to be done or when somebody needed to take charge.

He really cared about people's well being.

He was truly one of the good guys.

I am now going to invite Andrea to talk about her dad.

Neville Evans Eulogies

Andrea (Neville's Daughter)

12th June 2025

Before I start, I just want people to know that the music playing today is some of dad's favourite songs. Music was a huge part of his life and something that he would love to share with you today.

There are many things that I could stand here talking about, but I am just going to highlight a few qualities and memories that I have of my beloved dad. He was one of my rocks and when things were tough, he was always there for me especially when times were hard. He would not hesitate to jump on a plane to come and support me when I lived in Queensland or by being by my side to help support our kids.

Growing up we lived in a stereotypical house of that era. Mum was home with the kids while dad caught the train to and from work. He would come home and spend time with us as soon as he would change out of his suit from the day. Dad was like a "Pavlova". Hard on the outside, soft in the middle.

Dad was good at motivating people. I saw it as a kid growing up on a regular basis. This was done through our competitive natures and wanting to beat him while I trained for cross country. Dad would spend nights running round the block with me and yet I do not think I ever beat him back then. I am also my father's daughter and any opportunity to prove him wrong was also plenty of motivation.

Standing here the one moment I remember where motivation was high was when Scott was in Under 15 Athletics. Dad was his team manager, and the group of boys had made the state titles in relays for 3 events. Dad and all the other fathers made a deal with them, that if they got a medal, all the dads including himself would get their heads shaved.

I think this helped motivate the boys a great deal, as they managed to win gold, silver and, bronze that day. True to their word, all the dads sat down on stools the following week at athletics, and all got their heads shaved, with a crowd of people watching.

Dad always liked to make kids happy. That is all he wanted for both my brother and I plus his grand kids. I remember dad coming home one weekend and quickly packing us up in the car just to take us down to the servo where they had the teenage mutant ninja turtles. He would make games for us to play in the car on our holidays for the drive up to the Gold Coast or wherever we happened to go that year.

He dressed up as Santa multiple years in a row for Christmas at Athletics. He came down on a Ute most years and even a fire truck one year. I remember thinking who is this person dressed up and yet on a closer look it was dad. It was the small things like this that made dad who he was. It reached right down to his grandkids. This ranged from taking them to parks, printing out pictures of birds for the obsession that Halle had, sharing his love of footy and down to his youngest one in a Harper where he would play peek a boo with her for hours. It is still her favourite game.

As many of you know Dad had a love for footy. Every weekend during footy season he would be at Vic kick (now Aus kick) and later junior footy where he goal umpired and then watching Scott play senior footy. I remember wanting to spend that same time with dad, so I even signed up for a season of Vic kick myself. Believe it or not I did not have the skills, but dad still made me feel special by getting me to help demonstrate stretching to the group.

I remember many trips out to Waverley Park. Sitting in the cold. I feel night games were not friendly to dad. On one night game we had to wait until all the cars had left as we could not find our car.

On another occasion it was just dad and I. In those days he would rush to the car when the game finished. This time we found the car, but dad could not find the keys. We ended up running all the way back to inside the ground so that we could call mum. Mobile phones were not around then, and we all know Dad was not one to stay up to date with the new technology devices anyway. He called mum who was in her Pyjamas at home so that she could come and drop off the spare key to us. Dad found the car keys in his jacket pocket 2 mins later. Luckily, he called mum again who had not left yet, and we ran back to the car once again ready to come home.

No better football memories for me though than attending 5 Hawthorn grand finals with dad. These I will cherish forever and hopefully something that can continue with my family. Yes, I am going to be that supporter as that is how dad would want it. We won 4 of them and the threepeat is included. Yes, the theme song is also part of his favourite music. Go the Hawks.

Neville Evans Tribute – Bruce Bower

My friendship with Nev came about as we were both members of the Chirnside Park Country Club which he joined in 1987, and I joined in 1991. I think it is fair to say that Neville's golf swing was never a thing of beauty. He had a pretty good slice and was just an average putter. But he mastered the art of hitting his driver off the fairway and was a very good chipper which enabled him to get down to a single figure handicap at his peak and generally play off handicaps in the mid-teens.

His competitive nature and ability to get the most out of his game saw him win the Club's C Grade Championship in 1997, 2015 and 2020; the Seniors Club Championship in 2011; and the Father & Son Championship with Scott in 2010 and 2011. He also won many weekly comps. That's not a bad playing record! Nev was also very proud to have scored a 'hole in one' on Chirnside's 17th hole on the 11th October 2013 - a fact that he continuously reminded me about as I have never done that!

Although, in typical Neville pragmatic fashion, he did concede that he had hit the ball along the ground and thought it had gone through the back of the green which you couldn't see from the tee as it was an uphill hole. After searching for it in the rough behind the green he was about to call it lost when one of his playing partners discovered it in the bottom of the hole!

Whilst I knew Nev since the early 90s it wasn't until around 2005, when I was President of the Club that we really became good mates.

In the early 2000s our Club was in a bad way. Things were very grim financially and we struggled to get volunteers to take on the important positions necessary to run the golf program.

In April of 2005, with Neville getting close to retiring from work, he rang me and offered his services to help the Club in whatever way he could.

Without hesitation I offered Neville the vacant role of Golf Captain and so began an era when he played a vitally important role in helping to keep our Club alive and we became best mates.

Nev did an outstanding job over the next 7 years as the Men's Golf Captain and 15 years as the Seniors Captain. The appreciation of his work is evident by the number of people from within the golfing fraternity who have come to farewell him today.

Most people who knew Neville would agree that he had a very straight to the point, no frills approach to most things in life.

These qualities made him an excellent golf captain as he treated everybody fairly and with respect and showed no favourites irrespective of one's position or title within the Club.

With the Club struggling to support sufficient ground staff, Neville volunteered to get on the tractor and spend 2 days a week cutting the rough to help present the course as well as possible for the members.

Irrespective of what was going on in his life, Nev never shirked his captain's responsibilities. As an ardent Hawthorn supporter and member he would regularly rush off after his Saturday morning round to watch his beloved Hawks play and then hightail it back to the Club to conduct the days presentations at 6.00 p.m., often still wearing his Hawthorn beanie and scarf!

When we couldn't get a volunteer to manage our Colts pennant team, Neville took on the job himself. This was 'the job no one wanted' as the team consisted of mainly 17- and 18-year-olds without their own means of transport. The matches were played at 8.00 a.m. on Sunday mornings on golf courses in many far-off places like Gisborne, Goonawarra, Melton Valley and Whittlesea.

Getting this young team to the course in time to warm-up before the game was no easy task and involved

- Nev getting out of bed at 5.30 a.m. on a Sunday morning,
- rousting up teenagers who had often spent Saturday night out partying,
- packing his car with the players and their gear and being on the road by 6.00 a.m.
- Often caddying in the cold and rain for one of the team
- and then getting them back home again which included the obligatory Maccas stop on the way.

During his time as captain Neville realised that the Club's Seniors Competition, which at the time had Friday morning fields of around 15 players, needed bolstering up.

So, he took on the role of Senior Captain as well.

- He introduced new competitions rather than just the weekly stableford event
- He conducted weekly presentations after the game
- He got the Club involved in the Eastern Suburbs Senior Pennant competition,
- He invited our lady members to join the Seniors comps

- And he built up the number of participants to where they were averaging 90 players each week just before he retired as Senior Captain in 2020.

He also took on the role of co-ordinating the Eastern Suburbs Seniors Handicap Pennant competition for a number of years to ensure it was done properly. In recognition of his contribution to the Seniors Group the Club introduced a perpetual trophy for the most consistent player over the year and named it the Neville Evans Cup.

Neville was the 'all-round Captain' as he looked after the Young Members, the regular five and seven-day members and the Seniors. His contributions were recognised by the Board of Directors in 2008 when he was presented with 'The Club Member of the Year' award.

On a personal note, I valued Neville as a great mate. Together we joined the Eastern Suburbs Veterans Golf Association in 2013 which played rounds on the first Monday of each month at courses generally within an hour or so's drive from Chirnside Park.

We rarely missed a month and probably played over 100 rounds together with the Vets. We would share the travel in the early mornings to each course, solving the problems of the world on our way and then, after the round, make the trip back home often lamenting our bad play and missed opportunities. Nev's last game with the Vets was in October last year, just before he was diagnosed with the brain tumor. Travelling by myself to the Vets games since then hasn't been the same. I have really missed my travelling mate.

Neville was an inaugural member of a group which began in 2005 and called themselves the Bumsteaders.

Initially the Bumsteaders started off as four guys; Geoff Spicer, Mike Sheehan, Joffa Newstead and Neville Evans who had been Little Athletic dads together back in the 1990s.

To keep their friendship alive they started an annual golf trip each Labour Day weekend. Eventually their wives were included and in 2014 Ross Heinrich, myself and our wives were invited to join the Bumsteaders. Of course, for the girls, shopping not golf, was their sport of choice and the number of cocktails they consumed rivalled our tally of stubbies!

We were now all retired so the golf trips extended into 4 and 5 day breaks over the next 11 years as we travelled to places all around Victoria and Southern NSW, with the penultimate trip being a week on The Gold Coast in 2023.

The golf on these trips wasn't much to write home about but as the days wore on and the more alcohol was consumed, the stories grew wilder, the guys got louder and the women got looser. It was a great recipe for many fun times together!

As you would expect, Nev was a vital cog in the organisation of these trips as he religiously collected our comp fees, kept a tally of the scores and announced the winner of the Perpetual Bumstead Cup Trophy, handed out the overall and daily winners prizes and also determined the unfortunate recipient of the 'Silver Hand Bag' which was unceremoniously hung around the neck of the NAGA winner, which I will add, Nev won on a few occasions himself.

Over the last few years, a small group of Gardiners Run members and their wives, including the Sheehan's and the Evans, gathered at our place after the morning's golf on Grand Final Day to watch the big match.

With plenty of drinks and nibbles consumed, meat pies at half time and a range of bets on the progress and outcome of the big match, a great day was always had.

As you will remember, last year's Grand Final was a bit of a non-event when the Swans failed to fire, sorry to remind you of that Joffa and Smithy, but Nev managed to give us something to laugh about.

When we had guests, I would keep a small plate of Smacko's next to me to feed my dog under the table so he wouldn't harass people for food.

Unwittingly, Nev grabbed a handful of the Smacko's, and before I could say anything, chewed them up and swallowed them. When I told him that he had just eaten the dog's food, Nev replied "I didn't think they tasted too good!" and continued on drinking.

Sadly, within a month of last year's Grand Final, Mike tragically passed away in Athens whilst holidaying with his wife Sue, and Neville was diagnosed with an aggressive brain tumor.

It was such a shock how both of their lives had turned on a coin in such a short time!

- Not being able to play anymore with my mate for a round of drinks 3 times a week
- not travelling together anymore to the Vets games each month,
- not holidaying together anymore on the Bumstead Cup Golf trips,
- not listening anymore to him telling me how crap Melbourne was and gloating on the fact that everyone of Hawthorn's 13 premierships had happened in his lifetime,

Just doesn't seem right.

Life without Nev will never be the same.

I can't believe how much I miss him!

As I am sure many of you will also have great memories of times spent with Nev, I know I won't be the only one here today who will miss him greatly.

Can I please ask all of you to stand, lift your glasses and share with me in drinking a toast to our good mate, Neville Evans.

To Nev.