

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS APRIL, 2019

“Look to me. ... Yah Yah” André van de Plas

Dear Dance Friends

This is a special memorial edition of Footnotes which honours our dear dancing colleague and mentor André van de Plas, whose recent sudden passing has surprised us all. While this was sudden, the circumstances were also indicative of his ongoing dedication, as he was found deceased at home, sitting at his computer, with his fingers still on the keyboard; working to the end.

By way of remembrance, we have invited all our FDA membership to share with us their fond memories of a man whose instruction enlivened our dancing feet. This has been gathered together in this memorial issue of Footnotes, which I trust you will all appreciate as a “walk down our collective memory lane”. Should you feel compelled to respond to any of the following reflections, we would be delighted to publish these in subsequent Footnotes editions.

Pay!

Vale André van de Plas

His death on 30 January 2019 has left the folk dance world in dismay. So many have wonderful memories of his travels to Australia and a few have written how he touched their lives.



The above card was received with a note inside:

“Who knows, perhaps they are dancing up there as well...”
and

“If you have a spot in so many peoples’ hearts, then your life has been rich”.

MEMORIES OF ANDRÉ

From that first workshop in Marrickville, Australia in 1983 to his last class of 2018 at our Sutherland Shire Folk Dance Group, André has left a legacy of over 600 dances - plus the first 10 of the new 2019 program – not completely written yet - maybe taught one day.

He will be sadly missed for his sense of humour and fun-loving nature, excellent teaching, generous nature, loyal friend, and being easy to get on with.

Memories are too numerous to write about, but early ones include organising the first Teacher Training Course in Sydney in 1989/1990, the result of which was many new folkdance classes springing up around the country and the formation of Folk Dance Australia. Many more courses were to follow.

Favourite times were from Jan-July every year receiving the dvds for the year in the mail, writing up the new dances, numerous phones calls and emails discussing and correcting the dances – often disagreeing on rhythm. Trying to agree on the colour for the year. 6 months of fun and laughs.

My favourite week was the first week André landed in Sydney. Vegetable soup had to be ready for lunch on his arrival, eaten outside in the sun, and then the frantic and exhausting hours checking the dances so the new document could be taken to the printers the following day.

During his 5-6 weeks in Australia there were many classes with our Sutherland group, lunches whenever possible, workshops, jokes about anything, competitions about everything (from how many medals Australia and The Netherlands would win at Olympics to how long it would take to drive to Port Macquarie!) Always laughing.

Highlights included 20 Bowral weekends – and Julie’s practical jokes – André’s face always priceless to see when he realised he was caught out, again.

With the purchase of ipads, came the start of internet scrabble – one game in English, one game in Dutch – always competitive.

class was happy to stay back for an extra hour so André could get his teaching done.

