



Desmond John McCarthy ('42)

1/07/1925 – 6/01/2020

Desmond John McCarthy was born on the 1st of July, 1925, in Adelaide. He was the 5th of nine children born to Jeremiah (who immigrated from County Cork in Ireland) and Cora McCarthy. He grew up on Ross Road at Hectorville where his father and Uncle had a dairy farm. He spoke with pride of attending Rostrevor College, which was in the 'middle of a paddock' back then. His father and Uncle traded in cattle, and according to the book 'The Meat Game', were "one of the original stock dealers at the Gepps Cross markets". They soon owned a butcher shop and a milk route and had the last horse-drawn milk cart in Adelaide. Desmond often spoke of getting up early, milking cows, delivering the milk and then walking to school afterwards.

He spoke affectionately of teachers who never gave him homework because they knew how much work he had to do at home. He also spoke about how he broke his leg playing first XVIII for Rostrevor, so he had to become a boarder for one term because he couldn't walk to school. He remembered sleeping on mattresses out on the balcony when the weather was hot. When his grandsons started at Rostrevor, he was proud to tell them that he too, was a Rostrevor boarder!

In 1953, he married Margaret Fay in the Rostrevor College Chapel. By then, Des and his four brothers, Denis, Maurice, Brendan and Gerald, who also all attended Rostrevor, had become the 'McCarthy Brothers', and were carrying on his Father's and Uncle's business trading cattle at the markets. They decided that the South Eastern markets offered more opportunities, so they purchased 4,000 acres of land at Bangham, and the newly married couple, along with Des' brother Maurice, moved to the little four-room, corrugated iron hut amongst the scrub on the new farm which they affectionately named "Coolickey", after Jeremiah's Irish birthplace.

Margaret remembers getting bogged on the top of the sandhills in summer, and at the bottom of them in winter, while driving into Bordertown for church on Sundays. Des was a man of great faith, and church was an important part of his life. He was on various church committees for many years, often read the liturgy at Mass and was one of the drivers that saw the current St Mary's Church at Bordertown constructed.

Des and his brothers attended every market in the State, and several in Victoria for many decades. They built a reputation as honest and fair, and people often contacted them to sell stock directly to them. During the aftermath of the horrendous Ash Wednesday fires, they



were one of the only traders who offered a fair price for injured, burned cattle, and the auctioneers would shout “Thanks Mac” after each purchase. In all of their years of working side by side, no one ever heard a cross word between Des and Maurice.

Des became ill in 2019 and passed away on Jan 6th 2020. He was the last of the ‘McCarthy Brothers’. He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Margaret, his seven children, Philip, Michael, Patricia, Peter, Robert, David and Simon, 21 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. Des’ sons Philip, Michael, Peter, Robert, David and Simon all attended Rostrevor along with Grandsons Jason, Bradley, Anthony and Nathan.