



Peter Schreiner ('76)

Passed away 28/4/20 aged 61



A Tribute to Peter Schreiner by the Principal of St Mark's College, Mr Greg Hay

Peter Schreiner was a graduate from 1976 and gives his name to the major sporting award at the College – the P and R Schreiner Gold Medal.

I remember speaking with Brother Terry Hann about Peter Schreiner. The gracious Christian Brother grimaced a little at the mention of the name and remembered that Peter would crawl over the backs of 'red men' or 'blue men' in his absolute desperation to get the ball. There was an imperceptible shake of the head and half smile as Br Hann remembered coaching him. Peter sometimes forgot his manners on the footy field in taking the shortest route to achievement. Brother Hann remembered the single-minded warrior and a spectacular leap or the sheer intensity. I think Brother Hann has attributed at least one furrow in his forehead to Peter's 'enthusiasm'. Indeed, Peter is remembered by many for that enthusiasm and single mindedness and inspirational drive. It makes his passing sadder.

Peter died quietly in his home at the beginning of the COVID-19 isolation. He died too young and probably didn't take good care of himself. That was his independence and his toughness, and he would never complain. Born from resilience, with post war European migrant parents in the late 50s, Peter never grumbled or made excuses. He just got on with things. He lived across the road from Rostrevor as a young boy and he and his brother Robert claimed the College as an amusement park in the untroubled freedom of childhood. They bounced, kicked, marked, chased and punched any shape of ball, at any time, in any place, around the beautiful College. They may have been joined by Mick McCall, Joe Sommariva, Albert



Iuliano or the garrulous Paul Ferraro because they all just had to play. And in those days of innocent school mateship they eventually ended down at Roma's for a drink and a chat about who won.

Peter was a naturally talented schoolboy sportsman. His was an inexorable need to play and to win. He was always steely, driven, competitive. He ended up a schoolboy handball champion in the 70's as well as captaining the 1st XVIII. He loved athletics and captained the team in his last year. He ran the hurdles and surged over the high jump bar at Adelaide Oval in those days of honour and loud 'choomalakas' and tribal passions. Peter loved those moments.

After leaving school Peter and his brother Rob donated the Gold Medal for the Most Outstanding Sportsman in the College and it has been presented at Speech Night every year since. It seemed fitting to leave that legacy because there are so many who valued Peter's leadership and skill, and his drive to excellence. Peter had been outstanding. He had been a prefect and completed his Year 12 in 1976 even if matters academic were not always interesting. He tended to butt heads a little with authority but was a leader of significance. It's a great thing about Rostrevor. The College found the best in him.

I knew Peter through Handball. That's the game where he became an Australian champion and where he encouraged Jim Cormie to 'lose the halo and taste the blood'. He was a great leader of men and spoke with Jim Cormie about the hardness and the 'mongrel' needed to succeed at the top level. That had an impact on Jim who became a champion himself and we all learnt to know that it's hard to ignore Peter Schreiner and his ebullience; his optimism and the clarity of his vision to succeed. He was an extraordinary character. He had a way of enveloping people into his enthusiasm and making them feel part of what was going on. It began with the intensity of the eye contact and the firmness of the handshake when you met. It continued with the nick name he gave you immediately or when he called you 'brother'. When you met Peter Schreiner, he would engage, laugh and encourage those around him to laugh. He made things fun. He welcomed.

Peter was a proud father and hard worker. He wore clothes from the 1980s and never saw a reason to change from that most suitable of fashion choices. He was a stalwart of the Rosewater Bowls and Social Club, a past President and bar manager. He was a Life Member of the South Australian Handball Association and he was larger than life and full of energy. Peter had a passion for things with his truckie attitude, and that moustache, and his inevitable grasp of a VB tin or finding his lighter for another cigarette. I guess that Palma Merenti can produce many types of characters and men. Good men. Inspiring men. Some where they break the mould. Some who won't fit into the mould. And Terry Hann eventually relaxed and smiled, and they beat Sacred Heart that year, and Peter made an impact on many at Rostrevor. RIP