

LIFE MEMBERS - DAAC

For a fledgling club to rise to A grade level with a well equipped home track supporting VAAA Interclub competition and well equipped clubrooms requires dedicated effort from members at all levels. The Annual Reports of DAC indicate how widespread the effort has been. With the passing of time the club has seen fit to award Life Membership to those members whose efforts played a pivotal role in our progress and this section makes brief reference to their contributions.

In the first two decades of the club's development the following Life Memberships were awarded.

ALLEN STEVENS (1982)

Allen was a foundation member of the club and it's first Secretary. In all he filled the position of Secretary for 9 years and was President of the club for 5 years. Apart from his Executive duties he was a regular competitor and led negotiations with the Council in setting up the track and clubrooms. In the hectic times when the combined men's and women's Interclub competition was introduced at the Doncaster track he was the club's main trouble shooter on timetable pressures and equipment requirements.

Allen's contributions to the Doncaster Athletic Club did not cease when he left the Executive or retired from competition. His willingness to assist when called upon for course set-up at Bundoora Schools Cross Country or cooking sausages at our BBQs is much appreciated. Allen's involvement in the club that he began in 1971 is still strong as his contribution to compiling this document vindicates – an amazing effort, an amazing gentleman.

BILL CHAMBERS (1982)

Though Bill played many important roles in the club he will best be remembered for mustering the club's personnel in our climb to A grade level in both winter and summer competition. He is affectionately known as "The Godfather" as a result of his aggressive pursuit of registrations and his dedication to the task of managing our top senior teams. The renaming of the Doncaster to Park Orchards 8km Handicap to the Bill Chambers 8km Handicap in 1989 recognized the respect that the club had for his input to our development. Bill retired from the Committee after 16 years of outstanding service.

JEFF CHAMBERS (1986)

Though he was a key member of our Association Premiership teams in the mid 1970's Jeff cemented his place in the club's history when he took our first National title – the Under 20 5000m. As Jeff moved up to senior competition he became an important member of our developing teams that were to lift the club to the top levels in Victoria in both winter and summer competitions. Along with his many individual highlights another historical performance was his role as a member of the Doncaster team that set a new Australian record for the 12 hour relay.

Off the track Jeff made his presence felt on the General Committee and as a member of the Marketing Committee which played such an important role in raising finance to support the club's development. In

1985/86 he was appointed as our delegate to the VAAA Council – a key position which he filled for many years.

PETER RUFF (1987)

After 18 years with Old Paradian's Athletic Club Peter transferred to Doncaster in 1976 and brought with him a wealth of talent and a sound background in sprinting events which had been his forte. Within a year Peter was elected to the Committee where he held the positions of Secretary (from 1978 to 1981), Treasurer (1977) and has been a long standing Vice President.

Peter has played an important coaching role with great empathy for the junior athletes and developed into one of our most versatile competitors by honing his field events skills. Peter has also given great support over the years as an official in Interclub competition and was a representative on the George Rieschiecks Association for many years.

GRAHAM RUSSELL (1988)

Graham was an established A grade walker with the Essendon club when he opted to transfer to Doncaster in 1974. In his first year with the club he joined the General Committee and in the following three years was elected as Treasurer (1975) and then President (1976 and 1977). His talents as an experienced top level athlete and administrator were valuable as he worked with Bill Chambers and Richard Davis to lay the foundations of our cross country programs which were the basis of our sustained improvement to become a power in winter season athletics. At the same time Graham maintained his form in the summer season as part of the team that worked its way from C grade to A grade.

Apart from his own competitive input Graham played an important part in developing our budding walkers and our continuing strength in this field has been built on the foundations he established.

RICHARD DAVIS (1988)

Richard joined the club in 1972 and was quickly involved in coaching our young recruits, initially in sprinting and later in middle distance events. His mature presence in a group of young and inexperienced athletes played a key role in developing our junior teams to become leaders in the state with numerous Premier-ships.

As a teacher at Doncaster High School Richard introduced many of his students to the club and his weekly reports in the local press played an important part in promoting recognition of our activities. He was deeply involved in the development of our winter programs and was one of the instigators of the Park Orchards Handicap in 1976. He was also made valuable contribution on the committee over many years in the role of Vice President.

TOM HASSALL (1989)

It takes a dedicated clubman to compete regularly in A grade competition in summer and winter competition and then support the clubs second team in walking events when timetables allowed. Such a man was Tom Hassall who was also a prominent and regular supporter of activities conducted by the club to promote community involvement in athletics

While the high point of his competitive athletics career was as a member of the club's 12 hour relay team that set an Australian record, Tom played an important role in administration as Treasurer from 1985 to 1990, in the period when the club was going through major development and heavy financial commitments had to be managed. From 1985 to 1987 he was also joint Editor with Michelle Pain of DAC CHAT which did so much to build up the team atmosphere at the club and was a key member of our successful

Marketing Committee.

JOHN HIRST (1990)

In the 1960's and 1970's the name Hirst was best known in athletic circles for the skills of Monty Hirst as a coach/trainer/manager in professional athletics. In the late 1970's the club was fortunate to have Monty at to the track and invite our sprinters to work with his team. At the same time Monty's son John was continuing the family coaching tradition but in the field of middle distance and distance events. Throughout the 1980s John's innovative coaching and unstinting support for his charges led to the development of a team of athletes unparalleled in Victorian athletics. His dedication and skills played a key role in the success of Doncaster and opened the way for athletes to gain representation for Victoria in Australian Championships and go on to represent Australia overseas. For these achievements alone election to life membership of the club was assured.

However John was at the same time making a valuable contribution in other fields. He was always ready to help organise club events and to support the club by acting as an official. From 1978/79 he was a valued member of the Committee and, when the men's and women's clubs combined, he was elected to the Committee of the combined club.

MARK TOMSETT (1990)

Mark's win in the Victorian 15km road championship in 1982 was the club's first senior State Road Title. His subsequent selection to represent Victoria and his role in the team that set the Australian 12 hour relay record were important highlights in his outstanding competitive career. Mark continued to play a key role in DACs track successes in the following years. However important as his athletic talent was it was off the track that he also had a huge impact on the club's development.

A winning personality and an ability to plan and motivate others led to Mark's leadership in a wide range of off-track activities. He was a joint Editor of DAC Chat in the early 1980s when it developed from a basic newsheet to a fully fledged "magazine" reporting on all aspects of our activities. Throughout the 1980's sponsorship gained by providing personnel to support key mass road events was a major source of club finance. Mark's ability to recruit support from club members and supervise their activities ensured the success of these events and led to DACs continued involvement in such events as the Susan Classic and the Dream Fun Run.

PETER STEWART (1991)

As well as his dedicated efforts as a competitor, Peter was one of the group of athletes who undertook major steps in the development of the club through the 1980s. As Peter (Scoop) Stewart he was a joint Editor of the rapidly expanding DAC CHAT in the mid 1980's, a role that fitted nicely with his activities as social secretary of the club. At the same time he was a member of the Marketing sub committee who played such an important role in the generation of finances to support the vast expansion of facilities that offered so much to our athletes.

After three years as an energetic Committee member Peter undertook the role of Secretary from 1986/87 to 1989/90. Despite the heavy workload in this position Peter was also our prime contact with our major sponsor, FCL, was the chairman of the Championship Committee of Athletics Victoria and was manager of our team in the revolutionary State League competition. He resigned from the Committee in 1990 but continued to involve himself deeply in club activities and maintain DACs close links with DWAC.

ED OAKLEY (1993)

Though he was a key competitor in our senior teams Ed's Life Membership was more a recognition of the

role he played in the administrative activities of the club. From 1987 to 1989 he led the enthusiastic team of scribes who published DAC CHAT at a time when it was best remembered for presenting excellent data on results, informative Runner Profiles and the provocative "Rumours" column. After 4 years as a Committee member Ed was elected as Treasurer from 1991/92 to 1992/93.

A major contribution to the preservation of club history was his work in reestablishing club performance records and setting up the Record and Honour Boards that are displayed in the clubrooms.

Ed was a key link with DWAC and with his keen understanding of club administration he played a key role in negotiations for the combining of the men's and women's clubs. His Life Membership coincided with his election as first President of the combined club.

IVAN HARDING (1993)

Ivan came to the club with some six years of experience in key roles in the Doncaster Little Athletics Centre and was quickly recognized as an important asset to help with the conduct of our Venue competition. He was rapidly promoted from Starters Marshall to Track Referee and made good use of his organizing skills to help keep our overcrowded timetable running smoothly. In the cross country season he was a key Association timekeeper and announcer.

Ivan joined the club committee in 1983/84 and in 1984/85 he took over as President from Hal Grix, a position he held through to 1992/93 when the two clubs merged. The strength of the club both administratively and competitively owes much to his strong leadership through these years.

Ivan continues to be a key member of the DAC Committee not only due to his experience in running a club, but because of his long and successful history of dealing with the Manningham City Council.