



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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GALTON, MR B

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (10.04 pm): I also want to pay tribute to Barry Galton, a former member of the Queensland parliamentary press gallery. The relationship between politicians and the press gallery is often an arduous one. Not too many journalists can say they have witnessed the game from both sides of the divide—not the ideological divide but the other divide: between politics and the press. Even rarer a find is a scribe who is seeing both sides yet remains true to their journalistic ideals: fairness, accuracy and balance.

Barry Galton was one of those extraordinary people. He started off his working life in journalism on the Tweed and Gold Coast, taking a brief spell from the newsroom to answer the call of duty in the National Service. After serving with the 41st Battalion, Barry returned to the newsroom in the big smoke of Sydney before crossing to the dark side as an airline company publicist. He spent years travelling the globe and rubbing shoulders with celebrities including Frank Sinatra. Eventually he settled down, marrying his wife, Moira, in 1962.

Ten years later the couple moved to the Gold Coast, where Barry and his family would establish themselves as true locals. Every weekend you would find Barry at the beach, volunteering with surf lifesaving. Having joined the lifesaving movement as a kid, Barry was instrumental in creating and recording history in the making, writing a series of books on surf lifesaving in Australia and eventually becoming an historian of sorts on the Gold Coast.

Barry alternated between the worlds of journalism and politics, becoming the editor of the *Logan and Albert Times* and later a senior journo at the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. He wrote about politics, racing and surf lifesaving and wrote a column called 'Coast Confidential'. You name it, Barry probably wrote about it. He won a Walkley award in journalism for his account of the Tiananmen Square massacre in China in 1989. He was one of the leaders of the old press gallery during the colourful days of the Queensland parliament in the 1980s. I note the proud record of the *Gold Coast Bulletin* always being represented in the press gallery in this place.

He took up a position on the other side after he was poached by the new Premier Rob Borbidge in 1996, who hand-picked Barry as his media adviser. They became lifelong friends. Barry never really retired. He returned to the *Gold Coast Bulletin* when Peter Beattie became Premier. His words would colour the pages of the Bulletin until his dying days.

In the last few weeks of his life, the 72-year-old was diagnosed with motor neurone disease. He died peacefully in his sleep. To me, Barry was a laconic bloke who seemed to be around a bit and helped out in my first campaign in 2001 when I was a candidate feeling overwhelmed and rushed into the maelstrom of a by-election. One day I was door-knocking around Southport Park and I saw a car in front of me. A picture of me was squashed into the back window. It turned out that it was Barry Galton's car. Barry lived around there. One night at the Ashmore Tavern he said something to me that I ended up disagreeing with. He said, 'You do know it's as boring as anything up there in Queensland parliament.' That is something that I have to take issue with him about.

To quote the words of John Burton, a former editor of the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, Barry was a dedicated journalist, a caring family man, a loyal colleague and true friend to many. He was one of the good guys who always had a smile and a friendly word to offer. To his wife, Moira, his children and grandchildren, who are hurting at this time: may you know he will be missed.