



Speech by

Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Tuesday, 15 April 2008

MILLER, MR WA

Mr HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (9.39 pm): On Saturday, 5 April, William Alfred Miller passed away. In life he was always Bill. Every community has a Bill Miller—a determined family man, a contributor to his community, a ‘good bloke’ to his friends and neighbours. However, that does not mean we can brush over the life of Bill Miller and his contribution to his part of Brisbane’s northside.

Last Friday his children, Wil, Peter and Grace, family, friends and neighbours gathered to celebrate his life and, in particular, remember a life he shared with his wife, June, who passed away in 2005. Born at New Farm in 1935, Bill was a proud working-class man who provided for his family toiling as a welder, as a storeman and packer and, ultimately, as a wardsman at the Royal Brisbane hospital.

Bill was also a proud tenant in public housing at Stafford. The Millers were engaged residents in Nevitt Street, always ready to support and come to the aid of neighbours who needed a hand. But it was Bill’s contribution as a volunteer in a range of community activities—most often with June by his side—that made his broadest mark.

In recognition of his many years of involvement as a volunteer in the Girl Guide movement, Bill was presented with a Golden Friendship Award and life membership. This is particularly notable as I understand that it is very rare for this honour to be bestowed upon a male.

Bill and June were dedicated volunteers with the State Emergency Service, contributing a range of down-to-earth, grassroots skills to the work of the SES. Over many years, using their skills in first aid, Bill and June volunteered with the St John’s Ambulance at a variety of events. They were fixtures at major events such as the Exhibition. A highlight for them both was their contribution as volunteers with the 1982 Brisbane Commonwealth Games.

This activity led them to an association with the Fortitude Valley Junior Rugby League Club as the first aid officers for Friday night and Sunday games, beginning in the early 1990s. I can speak from experience in saying that it is hard to be involved at Valleys Juniors and not end up being drawn into that great historic club. And Bill Miller, as a dedicated community contributor, was no different.

Bill started assisting his great mate Ernie Dungleon as the honorary grounds keeper at Emerson Park. At Bill’s funeral, the President of Valleys Juniors, Mick Flannery, highlighted something that is widely acknowledged in junior Rugby League circles: Valleys has one of the best fields in Brisbane, a fact acknowledged by the number of finals they host. What is less widely acknowledged, but well understood by the Diehards family, is that this quality field owes significant debt to the sweat and hard work of Ernie and Bill. In 1996, Bill joined the committee and he was awarded life membership of Valleys in 2003.

Bill was also a proud member of the Australian Labor Party. He was a member of the Stafford branch since 1971.

Time expired.