




Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard Thursday, 25 August 2011

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE: THE HON. NJ TURNER

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (10.13 am): Neil Turner was a gentleman, a champion and a great character who was fond of reciting bush poetry and standing up for what he believed was right. He was also a good friend. You could have no better person on your side in this parliament. Other members have talked about Neil's time as the member for Warrego, a seat he won in 1974, entering this parliament at the same time as my father, Gordon, the member for Cooroora. However, my memories are of Neil Turner, who later won the Sunshine Coast seat of Nicklin, out of which my own seat was substantially created in the 1992 redistribution. The Nicklin electorate Neil first represented, after an election and a court case, stretched from Maroochydore and Alexandra Headland up to Buderim and west to Nambour and Palmwoods. Neil had successfully made the transition from a bush seat to a coastal area, bringing his brand of humour and humanity to bear as he served a new constituency. He loved people and he served them, no matter their rank or background.

You could say that Neil was a fatherly figure, mentoring and supporting me as I entered this place as the youngest woman ever at that time in the Queensland parliament. I say that with genuine affection but also with a touch of amusement. You see, sometimes I hear the odd person wrongly claim that I won my father's seat in this parliament. The facts are most of the population base of the Maroochydore electorate in 1992 was carved out of Neil's electorate of Nicklin and then the former seat of Landsborough and finally a part of Cooroora. However, it would be fair to say that some of the banter between me and Neil many times was similar to a father/daughter conversation. He was a genuinely caring individual who looked out for others as well as his colleagues and he was a great help in time of need.

In this parliament he excelled in his time as Speaker. There was a strength and dignity which people respected in a challenging parliament and beneath the authoritative presence the seasoned bush humour was never far away, whether in a quip or one of those famous handwritten notes he used to circulate. I also have some of those notes which strangely included cartoons and hieroglyphics to make his point. To Ute and family, I express my condolences and that of my parents, Gordon and Norma, and the wider Sunshine Coast. Neil served well and was well loved.