




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

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MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Cahill, Mr BJ

 **Ms DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (9.45 am): I, too, would like to pay my respects to Brian Cahill, former member for Aspley and one of Queensland's television pioneers and most colourful personalities, who passed away on 8 March 2015 at the age of 84.

Brian John Cahill was born on 16 February 1931 in Innisfail and in his inaugural speech in this House made particular mention of his connection with, and roots to, North Queensland. He was very proud of his Irish heritage and his family's connection to sugarcane farming and the railways. Whilst he never forgot those roots, he came to love Brisbane, living most of his life by the Brisbane River.

Brian was the member for Aspley from 1983 to 1986. Like all local members, Brian was passionate about his community. In his maiden speech he said—

It is natural enough for a member to consider that his or her electorate is the best, or one of the better ones, in the State. If that were not the case, one presumably would not seek to represent it. Let me say a little about the electoral district of Aspley so that it may be shown that it is not an idle boast to say that it is an area that one is privileged to represent.

As the current member for Aspley, I wholeheartedly agree with those sentiments.

I had the opportunity to meet Brian at a former members morning tea. It was a particularly special occasion, because for the first time it brought together four members for Aspley—Brian, me, Beryce Nelson and John Goss—to share stories about the wonderful community that we have had the privilege to represent. Brian always enjoyed keeping those connections with parliament even after he left this place, keeping in contact not only with members but also parliamentary staff.

Whilst the Aspley community will remember Brian as their local member, across Queensland Brian's legacy spans the arts, sport, teaching, as well as public service. I attended Brian's funeral during which his life's accomplishments, his loves and his legacies were acknowledged. It was held in a church he particularly loved, full of family and friends paying a warm and fitting tribute to quite a remarkable man. Brian's stepson reflected on the many facets of Brian's life including that he hated long speeches at events, including funerals, because it kept him from the cake. Anybody who knows me now knows that I have a lot in common with Brian Cahill!

Many in this House grew up listening to Brian firstly on radio and then as the newsreader for BTQ7, reading the station's first live newscast in 1959. The Leader of the Opposition made mention of a story of that first broadcast. Recalling his early days at the news desk in an interview with Kay McGrath, Brian talked about the desk being built too high, forcing him to sit on a wooden tomato packing crate instead of a chair. However, the crate was made of very light wood, so when he sat on it he actually fell through it. Brian said to Kay, 'I sat there with my bottom being spiked for the next 30 minutes while I did my first ever broadcast on television news.' But in being the true professional that Brian was, nobody watching that television broadcast would have known.

In 1980 Brian was awarded an MBE in recognition of his service to the community and radio and television news. What Brian pioneered, in my view, was a newsreader's connection with his viewers: his ability to deliver a bulletin as if he were near the story, always with a calm and objective style. But Brian was also an entertainer. It was his passion. He fell in love with the theatre in Innisfail as a young man, and that passion for entertaining audiences was with him all his life not only as a performer but also behind the scenes as a director and producer.

He was a foundation director of the Queensland Light Opera Company, and it was during his time in the theatre that he met fellow performer Denise, his beloved wife of 49 years. With Denise he founded Queensland Musical Theatre and he was the conductor of the Giuseppe Verdi chorale for many years. Whether he was performing a serious or comic role, conducting a chorale or directing a show, Brian's commitment to the arts was unwavering and he will be remembered fondly in the arts community for his contribution.

Brian was also an educator. He taught in remote Queensland schools, he taught in Victoria and he also taught here in Brisbane. He was a historian, a debating coach and a Rugby coach. He played for Brothers as a fly half and was a referee on the Gold Coast until well into his 60s. I understand it took a very brave player to backchat Brian during a Rugby match. He was a sailor. He loved travelling and he loved animals but, most of all, he loved his extended family. In closing the eulogy his stepson said—

What can one say about Brian in just a few short words: a loving husband and father, an artist, an educator, an intellect, a sports lover and a rascal.

To Brian's family here today—his wife, Denise, his children, Patricia, Christine and Mark, and grandson Lachlan—may your memories of Brian be forever with you.