




Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Record of Proceedings, 18 June 2021

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Edwards, Hon. Sir LR, AC

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (10.17 am): I rise to contribute to the condolence motion for Sir Llew Edwards AC, who was born in Ipswich on 2 August 1935 and who died aged 85 on 25 May 2021.

Sir Llew was a third-generation Ipswichian. His great-grandfather, Thomas Benjamin Llewellyn, moved to Ipswich from Wales in the United Kingdom. He has three children, Mark, David and Louise, who is sadly deceased. It is lovely to see Mark and David and their families in the gallery today. I also pay tribute to Lady Jane, Sir Llew's widow. Amongst her many achievements, I know that one of the things she did do incredibly well was bring a lot of joy to Sir Llew's life. I also want to acknowledge Sir Llew's brother and local Ipswich great Tom Edwards and his family who are here today, including Sam O'Connor over here. Thank you for your contribution.

As you can see, Sir Llew came from a very well known and respected Ipswich family. His son Mark, along with his wife, Gail, and two of their four children, still live in Ipswich and Mark is a much loved and respected pastor at Ipswich's largest church, Cityhope Church. His other son, David, is chair of the Ipswich Grammar School board and is doing an excellent job guiding the school that he and his dad and many in their family also attended. The school is indeed fortunate to have him. It was an honour to see student leaders and the headmaster of Ipswich Grammar School, Richard Morrison, in attendance at Sir Llew's state funeral a week ago.

As we have heard from previous speakers in this House this morning, Sir Llew led a life well lived. He attended Raceview and Silkstone state schools and later Ipswich Grammar School. He left high school to become an apprentice electrician, but following an accident in 1955 and many months in hospital recovering Sir Llew pursued a different career. After completing a degree in medicine at the University of Queensland in 1965 he became a doctor in Ipswich.

Sir Llew made good use of all of his time, particularly the time that he was in hospital, by not only determining a new career for himself but by falling in love with and marrying the mother of his three children, nurse Leone Sylvia Burley, in 1958. In 1972 Sir Llew became the member for Ipswich where he gained a reputation for being hardworking and effective. In fact, his years as an MP leant dignity and stability to a government that was often fraught with controversy and colourful characters. Sir Llew later became health minister, deputy premier, leader of the Liberal Party and treasurer in his time in parliament.

My friend and someone I owe so much to, the Hon. Dr David Hamill AM, became the Labor member for Ipswich in 1983 after Sir Llew retired. He said—

There can be no doubt that it was the esteem in which he was held by his constituents that secured his victories in what would otherwise be considered a marginal Labor electorate.

David has asked me to extend his and his wife Pat's sincere condolences to Lady Jane and his sons, David and Mark, and their families. David went on to hold the seat until 2001 when he himself retired. As was the case with Sir Llew, David led a distinguished career in parliament and is held in high esteem in the Ipswich community today.

Sir Llew went on to make a significant contribution as the 12th Chancellor at the University of Queensland, at which there is now a building named in his honour. In 1984 he was made a knight bachelor and in 1989 he received a Companion of the Order of Australia. It is not news to anyone who knew him that Sir Llew's time as chair of World Expo 88 was the highlight of his career. Without doubt, World Expo put Brisbane on the map and beautiful South Bank is a lasting legacy of that achievement. In 2010 Sir Llew was named a Queensland Great by then premier Anna Bligh with a citation that read—

... an outstanding Queenslanders who has made exceptional contributions to many fields. No matter his occupation, Sir Llew has always maintained his goodwill and sense of humility as he helped transform Queensland into the great State it is today.

What an incredible life Sir Llew led and what an incredible legacy he leaves. His life's achievements are many and varied. He has been a role model to all who knew him.

When attempting to summarise a life like Sir Llew's, we could be mistaken for thinking his life was easy or privileged. While it was indeed a fortunate life, he would undoubtedly have experienced challenges and struggles along the way. Leadership can often be a lonely place and, for some, achievements like his may have made them arrogant or entitled, but Sir Llew was the exact opposite. His son Mark told me that his earliest and most enduring memory of his dad is that he would give the same deference to a coalminer he would meet in the street in Ipswich as he gave to the Queen when he met her at Expo. People mattered to Sir Llew and so did equality and fairness, and that is one of the reasons his life and his passing means so much to so many in Ipswich.

Mark regaled me with another example of this. As a seven- or eight-year-old, Mark referred to one of the children of new Australians at his school as a wog, which so many of us did in those days, to our shame. His dad immediately corrected him and drove him to his good friend's cafe—one of our Greek cafes of the time—and they sat and talked for what seemed like ages. The lesson for Mark was that everyone was equal and everyone was our friend, regardless of where they came from, what they ate or the colour of their skin.

As a parent, there is no greater legacy to leave your children than an understanding of equality, fairness and love for our fellow travellers. Those traits are evident in Sir Llew's children and grandchildren, and I know he was extremely proud of them all. On behalf of the entire Ipswich community, I thank Sir Llew Edwards for his enormous contribution to Ipswich and to Queensland, and I extend my sincere condolences to all who loved him.