

A Eulogy to the late Frank Thornton funeral service 20.8.14

I thank you all for coming along today to pay homage to Frank upon his passing. Frank was a truly great guy, brother, uncle, a close friend and mate.

Frank was born to Gertrude and William Thornton in 1932 and first lived at Penrith where his Dad worked on the Warragamba Day Dam. The family then moved to Engadine and finally to Sans Souci in 1945. Frank has two sisters Jean and Ruth and Donna his niece. Another sister Margaret passed away a few years ago.

He was a guy who connected to all who were fortunate to associate with him. He had a very happy disposition, showed respect, accepted success or failure in the same breath, was never aggressive in fact life to Frank was always to be cheerful and happy with laugh and jokes. Frank remained this way until his last breath, he never complained of pain or sickness when in hospital, though he must have been suffering. His low blood pressure gave wise to his declining health but medicos could not stabilise this problem and along with other medical issues his health deteriorated and he passed away last Thursday.

Whilst a pupil at Hurstville Boys High Frank emerged as a talented schoolboy athlete and in 1947 was State Schools Champion for the 880 yds and 1 mile events setting record times for these distances. He also commenced cross country running with St George Athletic Club at Scarborough Park in winter months and showed outstanding ability at this discipline. When in later teens he put his talents to Rugby League and played in St George 3rd Grade side until he unfortunately suffered a broken collar bone. Doctors then ~~suff~~ suggested he leave Rugby League and concentrate on Athletics which he did and began running again with StGeorge Club. At 26 years old Frank ~~when~~ won the State Open Mens 880 yds Championship and at that time set a new Inter-Club record time for that distance. He went on to represent NSW in Australian Championships and was a regular member of our clubs successful relay teams. Frank was a great Clubman at Inter-Club competitions and would even run the 400m hurdles if called upon .

I am sure had Frank put more time and effort into his sporting career in Athletics than his social life he would have gone on to represent Australia in International competition.

Frank always liked his social life and a sherbet or two along the way. There were the dances at Vics Cabaret Strathfield, Petersham Town Hall, the Parādance Rockdale etc. in days gone by. I must say I got along to some of these places in my single days but I could not keep up with Frank. But thats the way Frank enjoyed himself and who could begrudge him of that.

Frank never married although many ladies tried to catch his eye, some did for a short while but he was never willing to become serious, he enjoyed his freedom.

Frank was presented with a Service Merit Award in 1975 for outstanding contribution to ~~St-Cere~~ St George Athletic Club both on and off the field.

I first met Frank when I joined St George Athletic Club in January 1957. From that first meeting Frank suggested I should ~~w--start-training-at-Seab--S~~ start training at Scarborough Park after work, so thats where our lifetime friendship commenced. He was my coach and was instrumental in whatever success I have had in my sporting career in Athletics with St George club. I will always be grateful to Frank for his confidence and encouragement in my endeavours that some day I would meet with ~~eus~~ success in the athletics arena.

On occasions I had the pleasure of training and ~~semet~~ competing with Albie Thomas and Frank two of St George clubs greatest athletes this was something to behold.

In our hay days Frank and I would meet with other mates at the Intersection Tavern Ramsgate on Wednesday evenings to work out how our punters ~~h~~ club performed last Saturday and discuss athletics, football and whose bet it was next Saturday. At one stage the Tavern opened for rock and role dances on Wednesdays so that put some spice into those evenings. Frank reckoned management made a good move as the talent was good for business in one way or another.

For most part of Franks working life he was employed by Kogarah County Council in the administration area where he made many friends and was a popular guy.

Following his retirement from the Council and athletics Franks second home most assuredly would have been the Intersection Tavern. He frequently (every afternoon I mean) would strole into the bar for a few sherbets and a chat with the bar staff and his friends.

For many years prior to his passing it was down to the two of us. I met Frank each Wednesday evening at the Intersection his favourite watering hole for a chat and a sherbet or two or three, well he had the three. He always walked up to the Intersection he said he needed the exercise and I would drive him home.

In later years Frank loved reading and was always in the middle of some sexy book or two. He also read the daily newspapers from back to front and could always tell you whats happening in our big wide world.

When Jean and I married in 1968 Frank was best man at our wedding. It was a wonderful occasion which we will never forget. Unfortunately Jean has since suffered a stroke and on every occasion I met Frank or spoke with him on the phone he always asked after Jean and sent his regards to her.

Thanks to the medicos and nursing staff at Sutherland District Hospital for doing everything in their power to restore Franks health problems and Deborah for organising todays farewell service to Frank.

Jean and Ruth would like to invite you all to celebrate Franks life with a drink and some light refreshments at the Intersection Tavern Ramsgate following todays service and I do thank Manager Tom for his kind gesture.

For almost 60 years Frank was my closest mate. I will miss him. Whenever I dropped him home after a visit to the Intersection or wherever Frank always had the last say that being see you later chip potato. Well Frank mate its my turn to say see you later chip potato.

On behalf of all present here today and those who could not be with us along with members of St George Athletic Club I wish to extend our sincere sympathy to Franks sisters Jean and Ruth and Donna his niece.

Ron Gribble