

A TRIBUTE TO RON HUNTER (SENIOR)

Ref : 2020/23



R.I.P
Ron Gordon Hunter
1928-2020

INTRODUCTION

All players, members and supporters of the DFNC were deeply saddened when the news broke regarding the passing of Ron Hunter (Senior) on August 27th 2020. Ron's faithful and selfless involvement in DFNC was inimitable; and he will be long remembered for his boundless kindness and gentle humility.

It was disappointing that, due to the current COVID-19 restrictions, the number of people allowed to attend Ron's funeral observance, on Friday 4th of September, service was limited. Although the poignant service was live streamed, there is no doubt, that if permissible, hundreds of friends of the Hunter family would have attended, in person, to celebrate the life of one of the club's most faithful and loyal servants.

The following tribute was written for the DFNC website in April 2018. The original article has been updated and reprinted below to underline the important role that Ron played in maintaining and strengthening the club since his arrival in the township in 1970.

Hopefully, the following tribute may serve as a small reminder
of
Ron's deep devotion and lasting contribution to DFNC.

Rest In Peace

A TRIBUTE TO RON HUNTER

AS WRITTEN & PUBLISHED

IN APRIL 2018.

THE TOWNSHIP OF WYCHITELLA

Ron Hunter was born in January 1928 and spent his younger years in the small Mallee township of Wychitella on a wheat farm with his 10 siblings.

Wychitella is 17km north of Wedderburn and in 1921 had a population of just 218 people. It believed that Wychitella is an aboriginal word meaning a: 'swamp rush (i.e. reed).'

Note 1: Wychitella was the birth place of Clarrie Hindson (born: 1907) who played 90 games with St Kilda (1930-36). Clarrie also captained St Kilda and later starred with South Bendigo FC.

Arthur Hando, who played with South Melbourne (1922-24) was also born at Wychitella. One text stated that it was a miracle that Arthur was able to play football, after returning from active service in World War: I, as he had been shot in both knees during battle. Arthur was one of the original ANZAC's and appears to be a 'larger than life' character.

Note 2: It is known that Wychitella FC was once affiliated in the Gladstone Football Association. Other teams in that minor league included Buckrabanyule, Borung and Mysia. It is recorded that Wychitella won a premiership in 1913.

EARLY YEARS

Ron's first job was excavating water channels across the Mallee. In later years, Ron was involved in earthmoving; and worked on constructing dams, roads etch, for private companies such as the renowned Theiss Brothers and other road building and infrastructure contractors.

Ron then commenced working for the Country Roads Board (CRB); and his work took him far and wide to such country towns as Traralgon, Erica, Mansfield, Trawalla, Broadford and Alexandra.

RON ARRIVES IN DROMANA

Whilst working in the Mansfield area, Ron met a young girl from Bonnie Doon, Dorothy Lockhart; and in 1955 they were married.

Fifteen years later, the Hunter family moved to Dromana when Ron was engaged to supervise the construction of the first section of freeway from Dromana to Jetty Road, Rosebud.

It is at this juncture in Ron's life that his long association with DFNC began. Ron loved sport, particularly football, and he became an active volunteer at DFNC.

Ron was always a 'willing and able' worker behind the scenes. Each training night and match day, Ron 'rolled up his sleeves' and undertook those vital, but often unseen, tasks such as line marking, sweeping rooms, cleaning the showers and collecting of match day litter.

THE HUNTER FAMILY AND FOOTBALL

Ron lives directly across the road from the Dromana oval and, consequently, he has always been the first 'port of call' for those people requiring assistance at the club. He has also been the 'unofficial security guard' and has kept an ever-watchful eye on the ground and facilities during the week.

Ron's four sons-Ron(Junior), Jim, Greg and Graeme all played football for Dromana at some stage; and his five grandsons Adam, Michael, Matthew, Jarryd and Aaron wore the club's colours at times and in the various grades of the Nepean Football League.

Michael and Adam played in the historic 2013 Senior Grade Premiership team and both were selected in the club's 'Team of the Post War Era' (1946-2015).

Jim Hunter played 65 senior games for DFNC in the period 1973-80 and gained a reputation as a fearless competitor in local football.

Ron Junior has been honoured with 'DFNC Club Person of the Year' on two occasions (2005 and 2017).

Note: Matthew Hunter was a talented footballer and like his father (Jim), he played with boundless spirit. Sadly, Matt passed away in May 2004; and following his death, the Senior Football Club named the 'Under:19's 'Most Determined' award in honour of Matthew. Past winners of the trophy include: Jack Powell, Adyn Musgrave, Jason Buchanan, Jordon McCulley, Dean Waugh, James Mc Ilfatrick and Danny Vance.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

In 1982, Ron Hunter (Senior) was granted Life Membership for his enduring service to the club; and in 2002 he also received an AFL Certificate of Appreciation for 25 years of voluntary service to Australian Football.

It is interesting to note that five members of the Hunter family are Life Members of the Dromana Football Club: Ron (Senior - 1982), Ron Hunter (Junior-1992) , Christine Hunter (2004), Michael Hunter (2017) and, in 2016, Adam played his 175th game for the club, in the clash against Rye in Round: 16, which qualified him for Life Membership of DFNC.

Readers will be interested to know that Ron Hunter is the brother in-law of former Richmond rover Robert Lockhart who played 13 games (7 goals) with RFC in 1961-63. The highlight of Robert's career at Punt Road was his brilliant performance in Richmond's 1962 Night Premiership victory.

Robert Lockhart was recruited to Richmond from Mansfield (after initial discussions with the legendary Jack 'Captain Blood' Dyer at the Maindample Hotel). Robert later played with country clubs Thornton and Bonnie Doon; and following a stellar career in country football, Robert retired to a farmlet near Yea. Robert passed away in 2010.

A HUMBLE & LOYAL VOLUNTEER OF DFNC

Ron recently celebrated his 90th birthday (i.e in 2018 when this article was originally written); and it was a day of great festivity for his family and many friends from Dromana and beyond. Although Ron is a most humble and unassuming man he was the centre of attention that day.

Ron has been an avid supporter of the club for nearly 50 years and in that time, has witnessed many changes on and off the field at Pier Street.

Finally, Ron has long been an integral part of the band of faithful volunteers who has taken the club 'onwards and upwards' to better things. In closing this article, the club is appreciative of Ron's faithful service and the role that he and his family have played in building and consolidating the club for since 1970.

THE END

RESEARCH AND REFERENCE INFORMATION.

Sources: The Hunter family, DFNC history archives, personal library files, VCFL archives

'Encyclopaedia of AFL Footballers'- Holmesby & Main. 'Victorian Towns'

Article reference: Tribute to Ron Hunter (Ref: 2020/23)

Article written for the DFNC : by Roger Spaul in September 2020

Administrator/contact: Graham Stelling

Email:historian@dromanatigers.com.au.or admin@dromanatigers.com.au