

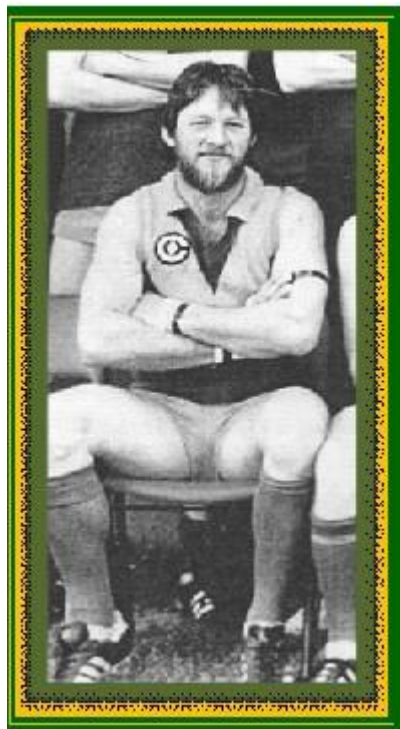
DFNC MEMORIAL SERVICE

FOR

GARY FOWLER

THURSDAY 20/1/2011

(Ref: 2018/3)



Former DFC player and stalwart **Garry Fowler** passed away in January 2011. After suffering illness for some time, Gary died at the **Smithton Hospital (Tasmania)** on **7.1.2011**.

Gary better known as '**Chooka**', had played with Dromana from 1986 until 1999; and, in total, had amassed played 157 senior games. Gary had won numerous club awards including the **Reserves Grade Best and Fairest Player in 2000**.

MEMORIAL SERVICE - JANUARY 2011

A **Memorial Service** was held in honour of Gary at the Dromana Football Club rooms on the **20th January 2011**; and a large crowd of family, friends, past and present players and officials attended.

During the service, the following tribute was delivered on behalf of the DFNC...

*"Thank you all for coming to this Memorial Service for our friend and former team-mate. **Brett, Dylan** and their family value your attendance at this service and the respect you have shown towards Gary today.*

It is appropriate to acknowledge the presence of the Club's Life Members in attendance today.

*As has been mentioned, 'Chooka' arrived at our club from **Ashburton FC**; and immediately impressed with his ball handling skills, accurate foot-passing with both feet and his ability to play with injury. He was a hard and strong-willed footballer.*

Over the next decade, 'Chooka' took the club to his heart and gave much energy and time to playing for Dromana. The club became a central part of his life; and the people who have gathered here today became a focus of his winter months.

As a young man, he was a star in suburban football and, as he aged, he became the proverbial 'war horse' at Dromana Football Club.

*While his club games, numerous awards and trophies are important achievements; it was what he gave to the club, in those dark and difficult years when we languished at the bottom of the **MPNFL Ladder**, was so significant and lasting to our club.*

*As part of the Reserves leadership group of **Chris Veale, Merrick Bradford, Marty Fowler, Graham Potts and Ray Robertson**, 'Chooka' contributed to the survival of the club and the rebuilding of the club in that challenging period.*

'Chooka' played on well into his 40's and the advice and help he gave to young players was significant at training and on match days. Many people will be unaware, that in the year 2000, at the age of 45 'Chooka' played 18

games and won the **Reserves Best and Fairest Trophy** with 62 votes. His great friend **Noel Ormesher** was **Runner -up** with 56 votes.

In that season, the team's motto was: **'Lift our sights and raise the standard'**. As a team leader, 'Chooka' was positive and tried to make the club stronger and more competitive. He played his 'heart out' for the club in that crucial season.

He also later coached the Reserves after injury had taken its toll and he was sidelined for a season.

'Chooka' is the classic example of the affliction that affects footballers. It is called **'itchy feet syndrome'**. The need to keep playing football was very strong and **at the age of 52 he played in premiership at Brett's club in Tasmania.**

At this point it is fitting to thank the club for what it gave to 'Chooka' and his boys. Often, the role that sport, particularly football, plays in our lives is overlooked or under-rated. In Gary's case, the club supported him in gaining employment, gave him lasting friendships and lifted his spirits in times of personal trouble and hardship. The comradeship engendered by the club was a powerful force in his life.

Dromana Football Club has a special place in the hearts of Brett and Dylan ...We should be thankful for what our club does for so many young men; and, of course, we should be very proud of how we survived, rallied, gathered momentum and rebuilt our club.

People like 'Chooka' deserve to be recognized for staying on, when the club struggled, while others walked away. His fighting spirit and his deep love of football helped see the 'club through.'

Finally....Brett and Dylan deserve special praise for the manner in which they have organized the funeral and this Memorial Service for their Dad today.

How can we ever forget ? ...

When Brett was only 10 years of age, our Reserves players presented Brett with a football to thank him for all the things he had done for our team during the season. He was a trusted, reliable and generous boy and 'Chooka' was so proud of him in the Carrum FC visitors' room that day.

Brett...you have shown maturity, personal strength and remarkable integrity during this time of sorrow.

*Brett and Dylan... You have impressed everyone with your dedicated efforts to do the very best for your Dad. **No father could have wished for more and no sons could have done more.***

Thank you again Erika (Civil Celebrant) and everyone who has gathered here to today to make this such a meaningful and lasting occasion for Brett, Dylan and their family.

Rest In Peace.

NOTE: In 2014, DFNC bestowed upon Gary a posthumous **Life Membership** in recognition of his 175 games with DFNC.

REFERENCE & RESEARCH INFORMATION:

Sources: DFNC Records –Tiger Talk- DFNC Handbook-Personal files.

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