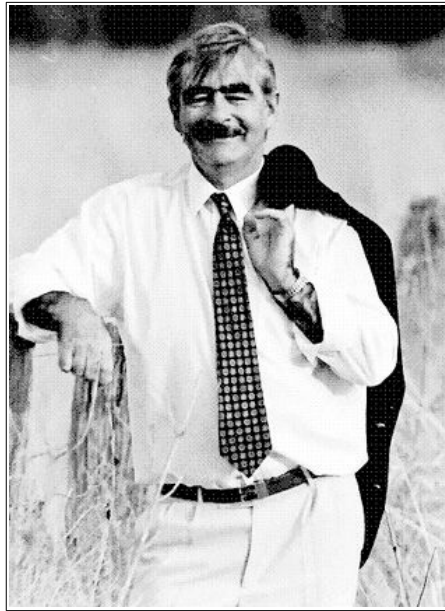


Geoff White OAM (05.07.1950 to 05.08.2022)



Geoff commenced medicine at Monash in 1969, and graduated in 1974.

His marriage to Brenda in 1979 was blessed by 3 daughters (Nikki, Rowena and Stephanie) and 6 grand children.

The following obituary appeared in the AMA (NSW) gazette ...

AMA (NSW) is mourning the loss of Dr Geoff White OAM. Dr White was a passionate advocate for rural medicine and a much-loved and respected general practitioner, who served the small NSW community of Manilla for almost four decades.

Dr White was committed to medico-politics. He served as President of the Rural Doctors Association of Australia and is recognised as one of the founders of RDANSW.

Dr White was an AMA (NSW) Councillor for many years and represented AMA (NSW) on the Board of the Rural Doctors Network and at Federal AMA Council of General Practice. Rural Doctors Network Acting Chief Executive, Mike Edwards said, "Dr White was one of the first board members of NSW Rural Doctors Network (RDN) and for decades he has been a core part of this family. His drive and his passion for rural health helped embed the sense of community and commitment that remain at the heart of RDN to this day."

Dr White received an Honorary Fellowship from the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine in 2007 and was recognised by the AMA with a Fellow Award in 2009 (photo). He is remembered for being a leader in the rural doctors' movement.

Dr White began his medical career as a locum in 1981 and received an award for his long service to Manilla at the Rural GPs conference in Sydney in 2016.

Dr White had a no-nonsense approach which he delivered without fear or favour to politicians or anyone he needed to influence on rural health policy. This approach was driven by his absolute belief in caring for rural communities.

Among Dr White's lasting achievements was the development of the Rural Doctors Settlement package which for many years could only be accessed via Dr White's computer in DOS format. This extraordinary package formed the basis of the remuneration arrangements for doctors serving in rural and regional communities to this day.

Dr White will be sadly missed by his family and friends, as well as his colleagues, his community, and the AMA.

A more personal eulogy was read at his funeral in Manilla by daughter Nikki ...

It is an honor to present this eulogy today; and I speak on behalf of my Mum, Brenda, and sisters, Rowena and Stephanie.

Our Dad was a formidable presence and words will not do his extraordinary life justice. The number of people who have kindly attended today and the many messages we have received give testament to the impact he has had on many lives. Geoffie was an adventurer who really lived life, never afraid to go beyond the norm.

As many of us recall, Geoff loved a little controversy. He was always keen to cause a ruckus beginning at an early age. While he was born in Brunswick, Victoria, he forever claimed to Bren that he was actually South Australian. This is because at just two weeks of age, the entire White family (Alan, Beryl, and their children Jeanette, Des and baby Geoffrey), drove from Brunswick to remote Woomera. In true White style they got bogged on the way. Alan was stationed in Woomera in the Navy and the family remained there until Geoff was 2 years old. He was the middle of five children – his siblings Des and Robyn here today. Sadly, Nett and Brian cannot be with us.

Always a trouble maker, on a day when he was meant to be acting as a responsible big brother, Geoff was teaching Brian to roller skate (down a big hill of course). Naturally, there was an incident. Brian fell and hurt the arm he'd recently had microsurgery on. To prevent a ruckus, Dad convinced Brian of a sure test to tell if his arm was broken. "Brian, just put your arm in this bowl of water; if it feels cold, it's not broken". Brian did...and it felt hot...and was of course the arm was broken. Not Dad's proudest medical moment and he landed himself in a lot of trouble

Always a hard worker, Geoff started working at the Vic Markets from age 11. He would catch the train on his own from Dandenong to the center of Melbourne and thrived flexing his mathematical skills.

He was an intelligent young man, frustrating his teachers at Dandy High endlessly with antagonistic arguments. He was very proud of being in Scouts and was awarded the highest honor – a Queens Scout – this photo proudly sits in his office today.

As we all know, Geoffie was determined and would always do things his way. His father, Alan, found this out one Saturday – while Alan was out looking at a motorized scooter he was planning to purchase, his sons had better ideas. Alan came home to find Geoff and Des riding a big proper motorbike around the front lawn, the Triumph 650. Dad rode this bike everywhere – occasionally even with mechanical failure. Once in order to meet a deadline, he rode home through a night of torrential rain with no headlights, tailgating semi-trailers all the way.

Geoff continued his adventures once commencing Medicine at Monash University and falling in with friends Pete Cowen and Rodney and Maz Bond. He showed the grit in his character by selling this beloved bike to pay for study accommodation when he knew he was about to fail 3rd year after having far too much fun.

Geoff passed though spent his final months of medical school with his arm in plaster. Legend has it, he broke his arm trying to protect a new motorbike from scraping along the

road during a “test run”, Robyn still remembers the sound of the crash. When his father asked what speed Geoff was going, the reply was “not that fast, I was still in first”. Out of hearing of his father, Geoff revealed the top speed in first was 49mph – so 80km/hr in today’s language. The plaster didn’t stop Geoffie wearing a suit to a Hospital Ball, it was simply a matter of modification with a slit up the sleeve. Thankfully, this was able to be repaired in time to sell the suit on to our Uncle Mario for a hefty \$4.

After finishing Medicine Geoff met Bren in 1976 whilst they were working in the Royal Flying Doctor Service in South Australia. He was a handsome street-smart young Doctor who’d come from big Melbourne teaching hospitals. She was a nurse and a proper Bushie, raised on a Sheep Station that encompassed 200square miles. At their first meeting Geoff was impatiently jumping around because the plane was late; they had an outback clinic to run. Bren was furious – she’d been on a night retrieval of a laboring mum and tiny newborn baby. Her plane had caught fire with flames wrapping around the wing. Once up in the air again Geoffie further put himself in the bad books commenting on Wilpena Pound below: “there’s no water, no trees and it’s not green!”. Well.

Despite this Bren couldn’t help but be struck by his kindness, compassion and generosity for each of those patients he saw that day in the outback bush clinic.

Mum and Dad returned to Melbourne together after the RFDS. Geoff had the idea that he was returning to the carefree bachelor life he’d previously enjoyed with his mates Rod and Pete. There were two rules he gave to Bren – “We don’t take girls fishing” and “We don’t take girls to the football”. You can imagine her reaction! She was off and out of there. When Geoff came knocking on her door to find her, he discovered he’d met his adventurous match who was not one to wait around. Bren’s flat mate had to confess that Bren had left, driving to NSW to visit her parents. Amends were made. Geoff’s friends later knew Bren was the one when they saw her roll in driving his Range Rover.

They married in 1979 and moved to Manilla in 1983. They had 3 daughters Nikki, Rowie and Steph. All of whom grew up on sample packets of expired antibiotics and no school sick days. Ever.

The girls were involved in all adventures including the first Simpson Desert crossing in 1986 with the Victorian Range Rover Club. 12 cars travelled in convoy following the charted Madigans line. 1986 was pre mobile phones and pre-GPS; it was pre-everything pretty much except a map, a Sexton and a compass. Geoff modified the Rangie in order for it to carry all the petrol, food, water and spare parts that would be required for a 2 week journey across the desert. Bren sorted out supplies – enough food, clothing and necessities for a family of 5 which included the girls now aged 6, 4 and just 6 months old. Legend has it that Huggies nappies lined every visible window when they set off.

Not unexpectedly there were “adventures”, also known as drama, on this trip ... Much of Geoff’s time was spent either in the driving seat, or with his head under the bonnet. At one point, the entire convoy were collectively low on fuel and were likely to be stranded in the dessert mid crossing though as always, a solution arose. There are many other renowned stories. This includes the infamous story of attempting to interrupt the Birdsville Races’

grog supply by requesting the local pub's fridge for perhaps a more honorable use. Further details of that story are known to many, and perhaps best saved for later in the day.

In terms of physical features, Geoff was blessed with particularly ravishing John Howard eyebrows. This feature has been fortuitously passed on to all 3 daughters to the extent that when Steph was working for him in the surgery a patient remarked: "oh, you must be Dr White's daughter, I can tell by your eyebrows!".

As a doctor, Geoff served the community of Manilla since 1981. He was passionate about medicine and was very dedicated to his patients. He volunteered tirelessly for the Rural Doctors Association – being president of both RDA NSW and RDA Australia at various times. He always remained a strong advocate for regional health. He was made a Fellow of the AMA and received an Order of Australia Medal for his commitment to rural health in 2003.

We have been honored by tributes made by his previous colleagues including "Geoff was a GP / AMA stalwart who challenged the status quo and certainly made me think harder and justify some of my beliefs. He was not a shrinking violet."

Geoffie softened once his grandchildren began to arrive. We loved how proud he was of all six of them – Clare, James, Harrison, Hugo, Eddie and Alex. He had begun teaching James how to drive in the same way he taught Clare and his girls – in an old Land Rover in low-low, going round & round the garden.

To the grandchildren he is known as "Pampa" and we are so grateful that he was able to spend quality time with each of them.

Not long before he passed away, Dad said to me "phone me whenever you like, I am always available". His was a life fully lived and we were blessed to be able to spend so much time with him together at the end, as a family.

Thank you.