

FORMER HORSHAM TOWN CLERK ARCH CONN LEAVES LONG LEGACY

By Chris Michaels (Horsham Times 14th August 2020)

Former Horsham Town Clerk and long-time resident Arch Conn passed away this week, just days after celebrating his 100th birthday.

He was born on the 1st of August 1920 and died on the 9th of August 2020.

His long legacy includes stints in various council roles throughout the Wimmera, a long association with the Horsham City Bowling Club and as a strong and dedicated family man to three children and three grandchildren. He is survived by his wife Dorothy.

Former Horsham chief executive and friend Kerry Shade said Mr Conn was a well-respected and talented member of the community and council.

"He was a well-respected gentleman in town," Mr Shade said.

"As town clerk he was responsible for the finances and rates for the council. He had a lot of wisdom and experience with the local government act. If you needed to know anything relating to government acts Arch would know."

Former bowling partner and friend Hughie McDonald said Mr Conn was a good player and up until five or six years ago was a regular at the club's happy hour, where he loved to socialise.

"I first met Arch in the 1950s in the air force association, and we later joined the Horsham Bowling Club together," Mr McDonald said, "He always played a good game of bowls."

When the club moved to its present location in Park Drive Mr McDonald said Mr Conn was instrumental in that move and looked after the finances of the club during a difficult time.

"He helped with the finances and had his finger in the pie," Mr McDonald said.

"He was happy to sit back in the background, but he had a firm grip on the finances and became a Life Member of the Horsham City Bowling Club."

Jennifer Conn, Mr Conn's daughter, said the family managed to celebrate his 100th birthday before he passed away.

"He always wanted to live to 100 as his mother had, so it was nice that we could do that," Ms Conn said.

"Dad was very knowledgeable about local government and always very respectful of people. He was very committed to his family, making dad jokes all the time and was a very humble person too."

Ms Conn said her father was heavily involved right across the community, from the bowls club, to council and as a member of the Freemasons and RSL Clubs.

"He knew a lot of government people, and was also trained as an accountant," Ms Conn said.

"He spent 75 years as an accountant. He loved technology, be that videos or gadgets. He loved his gadgets."

Sue Blakey from Eventide Homes in Stawell, where Mr Conn spent the last few years of his life said he was a joy to have around and liked by all.

"He was here at the nursing home since 2017 and settled in well," Ms Blakey said.

"Arch was a sweet gentleman and got on with everybody. He loved being around people."

Ms Blakey said one of Mr Conn's roles at the nursing home was to raise the flag every morning.

"It was Arch's job to put up the flag every morning, a role he took very seriously and he looked forward to it," she said.

"He would wait for activity supervisor Wendy Dumesney to arrive at work to undertake his duty."

Friend and council colleague Bill Ower worked with Mr Conn in the 1980s and said he was a quiet achiever.

"He was a very, very good and experienced person," Mr Ower said. "He was a first-class operator. He knew his job backwards and was always efficient, and always punctual with his work."