

Like so many of his students I truly loved your father. He had an amazing ability to bring out capacity in people that they did not see in themselves. I met him doing post graduate courses and he invited me to speak at a forum with him about the Mabo decision in around 1994. From then on, we were friends and he would direct opportunities my way to share the task of helping people understand what Mabo meant – something I would never have thought to do but which it was a privilege to do with his encouragement. He was kind, generous, patient and never patronising. I saw how he created an environment in which people could ask the questions that were on their mind so that dialogue was opened up where before there was fear and bias. He was such a good teacher and came and contributed to the classes I taught, lecturing with flawless timing he attributed to his radio work in Canada. I was delighted to learn he and his brothers and sisters had been friends of my father and his brother and sisters when they were growing up in Mosman. Dad and Garth were in the same scout troop and I recall it delighted his fellow septuagenarian former scouts when your father wore his old scout uniform to the celebration of, I think, the centenary of the First Mosman troop a few years ago. His scholarship combined with his warmth and gentle character made him such welcome company everywhere. He even introduced me to my life partner for which I will always be grateful. One night in Darwin I introduced him to Murandoo Yanner with both of them embracing saying they had long wanted to meet each other. I left them together for a long night of discussion (somewhat beverage assisted I learnt later) . He will be sorely missed and always cherished. I know that Professors Tony Blackshield, Michael Coper, Peter Wesley Smith and (former) Justice Jane Mathews deeply regret they cannot be with us today but they are in spirit.

Vale your dear, dear father. He will always be present in the work that we carry on built on the understandings he created for us all,

Susan Burton Phillips