



Vale

Bryan Maisey “Griff” Griffiths

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are here today to remember and celebrate the life and times of Bryan Maisey “Griff” Griffiths, however I firstly wanted to take the time to introduce myself. I am Duncan Maisey Griff Griffiths, son of Griff and not some homeless vagrant who has snuck onto your beautiful Island, I think Dad would have wanted that clarified here first, but please if I do concern you drastically with my appearance I feel I should point out the emergency exits which are situated here and here (Turn and point to exits as shown by lovely Air NZ hostesses) My thanks to Air NZ for showing me that yesterday on the flight over, and also I extend my sincere thanks to them and everyone that helped get me here today.

But today we are gathered to celebrate the life of Griff Griffiths. Together with my sisters and beautiful Mum we wish to thank Norfolk Island for coming together in such magnificent “Togetherness”, because together with that “togetherness” we know that our pain at losing Griff together with this joy shared and together with the “togetherness” is just the kind of “togetherness” Griff would have wanted coming together on such an occasion.

So how does one express the enormity of the kind of life lived by such a remarkable man into such a short speech. Where does one start or concentrate on with a man of such character, integrity and who has lived such a full life. Farmer, Dental Surgeon, big game fisherman, champion gardener, sportsman, hunter, business man, and even snooker champion. Whilst growing up a lad like myself could not have asked for a better example of a man to try and emulate, and of all the men I have ever met, this man was the most complete I have ever encountered.

Dad was a man who smiled with his eyes but who could also instill the fear of God in you with just a flash of those deep baby browns. I learned this quickly as a lad when I would put something away wrong in his fastidiously tidy work shed, or when he would come in from a hot day in the garden for a “Shandy Beer” and realised I had probably stolen his lemonade or even his treasured chocolate fish or peanut slabs he always kept stashed in the fridge.

I can never truly express how much I owe this man. Not just for the life he gave me, but for the times I fell down and he would pick me back up, always there

and with an uncanny patience to see me through, often using the phrase to settle me down, “Geeze kid you’ve got to stop charging like a bull at a gate”.

I am here today in no small part to this great man’s help and tireless love, and so in his honor I wish to focus my pain not on myself but on his other great joys and loves in his life, his girls.

So, Bryan Maisey Griff Griffiths was born on the 23rd of December 1941 to Nancy and Jesse Griffiths. The Griffiths family were one of the great farming families of the South Island of NZ and the Otago region and were highly regarded in the farming of Merino sheep. Along with his brother Robyn and sisters Gillian and Suzanne, Griff grew up on the farm without power and were raised with an extremely strong work and integrity ethic. Attending Otago Boys High School, Griff struggled through his initial schooling but eventually achieved the position of head prefect and worked his way to go on to attending and graduating from the prestigious Otago University, graduating in 1966 as a BDS dental surgeon, something he was so justifiably proud of.

His youth was full of activity and fun with his siblings, especially with his brother Rob, with both working and competing in numerous sports and activities from rugby to curling, hunting to hockey. It was Griff’s character that his constant domination of his brother Rob in these activities never caused any rift or jealousy and the two would always remain close and incredible mates which is something Griff cherished.

It is with saying this I would like to express the deep sorrow felt by all of Griff’s family right now and on behalf of them I would like to pass on the condolences and support from all the Griffiths’ and Scott’s and related Kin who could not be here today.

Once he had graduated from Otago University Griff ventured out into the world from the farm to forge his own life in “The big smoke”, and it was then on a hot and steamy Otaki night that his eyes fell upon the beautiful blue green eyes of what was to become the love of his life. From that moment on he and Nancy were inseparable and they set out on what would be the great adventure of their shared life together. They were married in a dual wedding (No folks that’s not what you’re thinking) with Nancy’s sister Jenny and her husband. Griff and Nancy were soon blessed with the arrival of their first child Andie, followed quickly by the birth of Nene who, as the middle child, there is

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NOTICE

**Red Cross Norfolk Island
“BIG CAKE BAKE”**

**Friday 25 October from 9a.m. at
The Norfolk Mall.**

Donations of baking, preserves, jams, any eatibles most welcome. Funds raised go to Red Cross Australia for use in emergency situations. Please contact Celia on 54280 for more information

Bryan Maisey "Griff" Griffiths - continued

no need to mention any further. Then several years later they finally got it right with the arrival of myself

Both girls, like myself, have some extreme similarities with Dad and in many ways some vast differences, but despite the differences (which Dad always used to say were "the wrong parts you got from your mother) he revelled in being a part of our lives and developments. With that I wanted to take the time to acknowledge to my sisters how very proud he was of you both, and how he marvelled in your incredible successes and talents. You provided some of the greatest joy in his life and I know he wanted you to know that.....and so it was for many years the path of Griff developed his family life and his private practice in Lower Hutt, Wellington NZ, with Dad becoming an incredibly respected man in the community.

I remember with great love his joy at having been elected to President of the Hutt Bowling Club at such a young age, and I thought I should mention that Griff was regarded as having been the best most effective President ever. He was even able to address the drastic problem of Mum and Fran Owles allowing for some fairly shoddy sandwich cutting skills to develop in the preparation of cucumber sandwiches for the Bowler's lunches.

Yes, life went on and Dad's involvement in the community continued with himself and several others (including Griff's life long best mate Ron Owles) forming what was to become and known as "The Hutt Valley Businessmens Club". This then became like a second home for the Griffiths kids celebrating with other families the joys of group Xmas parties and events, so much so us Griffiths kids grew up believing that all Xmas carols should be sung to the tunes and beats of "Hooked on Xmas Albums".

Having developed this incredible life and community in the Hutt, it came as a surprise when in 1987 the Griffy's packed up and moved to Brisbane, Australia. I think this was a most special time in Griff's life as it brought such a unique closeness and frankly "togetherness" to the family. Griff would find himself then working in the Qld prison service and in this job he really did find a huge amount of joy and pride and being the kind of man he was it would come as no surprise that he was equally loved and respected by both sides of the fence so to speak. And the Griffy's continued on in their lives and the eventual growth of the family as he watched his much loved children grow up and marry and begin their own families with his much adored grandkids, Emma, Jake, Charlee, Hori and Mereana.

In 2004 I had reached a certain level in my brief corporate career and Dad contacted me via phone and excitedly told me he had been offered a new job on the small island of Norfolk. Being Dad he had wanted to know how I felt about himself and mum leaving and how I felt about the distance it may cause. As much as that distance and my own family's struggles would go on to prevent me from getting to my Dad, I would offer him the same advice today I did then, "Go for it Da, I've got your back 100%". He was so excited and

i know today that somehow Griff just knew that this was the next great path on which to take his and his darling girl Nancy's lives.

Here again I wanted to thank the people of Norfolk Island for providing such immense joy and satisfaction to Griff in this part of his life. He was incredibly proud to be a part of Norfolk and did everything he could to embrace and immerse himself into the history, culture and community of this incredible place. I will always hold some shame at having not been able to get to my da as much as I would have liked, I take incredible comfort in knowing how much this Island provided my da in love and respect in this time and in my absence and I thank you all again.

But before i finish off my goodbye here I wanted to take some time and pass on some messages both of support and words which I felt Griff might want mentioned as well.

Some of the messages recieved in the last few days.

The great light-grey slacks company incorporated would like to both pass on their respects as well as announce their complete retirement from the fashion industry.

Gordons gin, have sent their condolences and since their initial slump in sales upon the death of dad's best mate Mr Ronald "Doc" Owles several years ago, they too have announced an immediate shut down of production for predicted financial loses.

We received 27 calls from various butchers in South East Qld, all expressing their love and respect for Griff and how proud each of them was for being his favourite butcher.

But quite honestly I did receive numerous messages of support or thoughts from many rugby players in Qld, all remembering the quiet unassuming strapper and water boy who had at some time helped get them on the field before a game.

Some of the final messages I felt Griff might like passed on as well were...

Robyn, "you were my favourite brother, I adored you. I'm not sure if I ever said sorry for hitting you in the head with a rabbit trap. I wasn't, and despite the obvious damage it probably caused you, right is right and facts dont care about your feelings and it was 1952 we got power in Otago not 1950", that is all.

Nene, Andie," I love you and who and what you have become is one of the greatest loves and achievements of my life for which I am so proud. Thank you, but also please dont drive your cars home with flat tires anymore and Dunky was my favourite", that is all.

Nancy, the love of my life, my one and only. I adored you and that is all I could ever say about that without welling up.

Dunk- you can use the name Griff now. Love ya champ but your hair looks like a big bloody girl, lad get a haircut.

And so folks as I look to finish saying goodbye to my da, my best mate and hero, I begin to tear up and yet even that makes me smile as I remember da would tear up at the drop of a hat when expressing his love.

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Bryan Maisey "Griff" Griffiths - continued

But I also remember as the tears start how as a kid playing rugby when I went down hurt and felt I couldn't get up, a quiet voice would ring through the crowd's noise and I would hear those words that would fire me up and get me back on my feet to have another crack. "Hollywood, Hollywood" or if I had missed a series of kicks in a game you might hear "At least you're consistent son"

So I hold back my tears and offer the poem Dad told me as a kid to help me through when I was doing it tough, its short and sweet but I think dad picked that for me because of my dyslexia.

"I never saw a wild thing feel sorry for itself. A small bird can fall frozen dead from the bough of its tree without ever having felt sorry for itself" DH Lawrence.

And as I start to think of a song that I would most like to remember Dad by, my humming of Sinatra's "I did it my way" keeps getting pushed out of my head and replaced with a silly little ditty which repeats over and over again like some sort of subconscious memory which I feel is ingrained from years of waking as a kid to wild laughter and glass clinking, music and party noises, even the smashing of glass tables as Jenny Simpson decided to use them to dance on. This ditty plays over and over in my head with the same words, "5 foot 2, eyes are blue, cootchie cootchie cootchie coo, has anybody seen my girl"

But lastly I thought perhaps a tribute to my da might be most appropriately put by reading out the perfect recipe for a Griffy Gin.

A dash of sodawater not too much Nancy that room in the glass is for the Gin.

A knock of integrity, a splash of remarkable, two squeezes of love, a generous dollop of mischievousness, a gulp of honor, a crack of humour, several cubes of cool determination and a hell of a lot of Gin, all served by a quiet funny delightful man dressed in either light grey slacks and a white Lowes shirt and tie or the same man without a shirt and slippers with his white bonds undies fixed firmly several inches above his pants line. I know you are watching down on us right now Griff with a gin in hand and cheeky smile on your face and I hope you are marvelling proudly at the remarkable life you have lived. You should be very proud, we all are of you, I love ya Da and always will.

Your Son, Griffy.

Thank You

From the Family of Griff Griffiths, we would like to offer our sincere thanks to the people of Norfolk Island for their help and support laying Griff to rest. We offer a special mention to the Doctors, Nurses and hospital staff along with the Bowling Club members for their Guard of Honor, and also to the Bowling Club and restaurant staff who did such a wonderful job helping us celebrate Griff's life. Also a special 'thank you' to Shane and his assistants for tending to the graveside, and for Moochie and Trevour for stepping forward and graciously watching out for us Griffy kids

as we carried Griff to his resting spot, and to Spindalls for all his love and support through this hard time and for the wonderful friendship he shared with Griff over the years.

We would like to also mention and thank the likes of Dids and Gaye Evans for the flowers provided, and the "Usual Place" for the beautiful wreaths provided. Milton and Simone for their selection of music for Griff, Don Reynolds & his group for their beautiful music and singing on the day, and also to Jackie and Joy Bell and all the other folks who all helped us in our time of grief.

Thank you to David Buffet for giving his special guidance and direction during the ceremony, and for the beautiful words given by Griff's Brother Robin, his daughter Janine and Michael Letters. A special mention to the love and support of the whole Letters family including Kelly and gorgeous little Veronica during this time.

Again to the people of Norfolk we thank all those who attended or helped us celebrate the remarkable life of our dear Griff Griffiths who will be sorely missed - but always loved.

Duncan Griffiths (son of Bryan and Nancy Griffiths)

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