

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**Tuesday, 29 July 2008**

**(Extract from book 10)**

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Lim, Mr Muy Hong	Clayton	ALP			

<sup>1</sup> Resigned 6 August 2007

<sup>2</sup> Elected 15 September 2007

<sup>3</sup> Resigned 2 June 2008

<sup>4</sup> Elected 28 June 2008

<sup>5</sup> Elected 15 September 2007

<sup>6</sup> Resigned 6 August 2007



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**TUESDAY, 29 JULY 2008**

CONDOLENCES

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**Tuesday, 29 July 2008**

**The SPEAKER (Hon. Jenny Lindell) took the chair at 2.05 p.m. and read the prayer.**

**CONDOLENCES**

**Hon. Lindsay Hamilton Simpson Thompson,  
AO, CMG**

**Mr BRUMBY (Premier) — I move:**

That this house expresses its sincere sorrow at the death of the Honourable Lindsay Hamilton Simpson Thompson, AO, CMG, and places on record its acknowledgement of the valuable services rendered by him to the Parliament and the people of Victoria as member of the Legislative Council for the electoral provinces of Higinbotham from 1955 to 1967 and Monash from 1967 to 1970 and member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Malvern from 1970 to 1982, Assistant Chief Secretary and Assistant Attorney-General from 1958 to 1961, Minister of Housing and Minister of Forests from 1961 to 1967, minister in charge of Aboriginal welfare from 1965 to 1967, Minister of Education from 1967 to 1979, Deputy Premier from 1972 to 1981, Chief Secretary from 1978 to 1979, Minister for Police and Emergency Services from 1979 to 1981, Treasurer from 1979 to 1982 and Premier from 1981 to 1982.

When Victoria's 40th Premier, the Honourable Lindsay Thompson, passed away on 16 July our state lost not only a proud and passionate Victorian but also one of this Parliament's most enduring servants. I want to begin today by extending my sincere condolences to the member for Sandringham.

Lindsay Thompson was a Victorian of great integrity and substance, a man who won the kind of hard-earned respect that crosses political boundaries. That was perhaps best illustrated when on his final day in this Parliament, on 5 November 1982, our 41st Premier, John Cain, Jnr, moved a motion of appreciation for his services to the Parliament and to the people of Victoria. That motion drew 21 speakers, with 10 coming from Labor Party ranks, and the motion culminated in a spontaneous round of applause almost unprecedented in the Legislative Assembly.

The Melbourne *Age* said this of Lindsay Thompson on his retirement:

He has served with rare decency, dedication and distinction and for this he deserves the gratitude of the Parliament and of the people.

In his speech John Cain recalled one of his earliest memories of Lindsay when they were playing on opposite sides in football at Melbourne University in the late 1940s and early 1950s. One future Labor

Premier was playing for the law faculty; one future Liberal Premier was playing for the arts. John could not resist mentioning that his side won the contest and Lindsay could not resist interjecting, 'Only just!'. It was in many ways a fitting finale to a great career.

His final words to Parliament, which I should quote, were:

Without any shadow of doubt, as long as I live I shall remember very clearly with fondness and a small tinge of pride the way in which the house has farewelled me this evening.

Lindsay Thompson was born in Warburton in 1923. His parents were schoolteachers, which may partly explain his lifelong passion for education. After graduating from Caulfield Grammar as school captain and dux in 1940 he went on to serve his country in World War II, including for 18 months as a signaller in Papua New Guinea. On his return he enrolled at the University of Melbourne and obtained a bachelor of arts with honours and a bachelor of education. He went on to teach at Malvern Central School and Melbourne High School.

Lindsay married Joan Poynder in 1950. It was a union that would stand the test of time and produce three children: Heather, Murray and David. Importantly, and crucially, Joan also gave him the support he needed during the ups and downs of a political career. In his autobiography, *I Remember*, Lindsay said this of Joan:

I could not have successfully endured the political storms and battles of the years without Joan's tolerance and unfailingly loyal support.

Lindsay Thompson's parliamentary career was a marathon of public service and perseverance. He was a member of this Parliament for an epic 10 172 days. When you think of it, that period in history spanned the government of John Cain, Sr, at one end, Lindsay being elected in a by-election at the end of that government, and the government of John Cain, Jr, at the other end.

His political life began in 1955 when he won the by-election for the Legislative Council Province of Higinbotham. At the time he was 32 years of age and the youngest ever member voted to the upper house. His talents were quickly recognised. He was appointed Assistant Chief Secretary and Assistant Attorney-General in 1958, Minister of Housing and Minister of Forests in 1961, and minister in charge of Aboriginal welfare in 1965. He was also the Liberal Party's deputy leader in the upper house between 1962 and 1970. In 1967 he became the member for Monash Province and was appointed Minister of Education, a

position which he held for 12 years with great distinction.

His commitment to and enthusiasm for Victoria's education sector is without doubt one of his lasting legacies. It was during this time that Lindsay Thompson achieved worldwide fame by volunteering as the go-between for the Faraday kidnappers. His selfless concern for the kidnapped teacher and her six students won the admiration of all Victorians and, indeed, all Australians. His humility in the aftermath of the crisis was typical of Lindsay Thompson. He helped ensure that the Faraday teacher, Mary Gibbs, was awarded the George Medal for high bravery. After he was awarded the Royal Humane Society bronze medal for bravery he simply said:

I just wanted the return of the children.

In 1970 Lindsay Thompson transferred to the Legislative Assembly, winning the seat of Malvern. He became Deputy Premier in 1972, which was a position he held for nine years. His loyalty to his leaders and to his party was widely admired. To quote Sir Henry Bolte, he was always 'stable, correct, genuine and sincere'. It was these qualities that the Liberal Party turned to in 1981 when Lindsay Thompson succeed Sir Rupert Hamer as Premier on 2 June. Needless to say, after 26 years in office this was not an easy assignment. Sir Henry Bolte put it bluntly around that time when he said, 'He had no hope'. Typically, though, Lindsay Thompson led his government with energy and commitment. He won the admiration of his colleagues during his stint as Premier as the ultimate team player, and that was a description — a moniker — that has stuck to this day.

He was also very well known as a forceful and eloquent orator. In particular I remember — and I know many members of this house remember — his eulogy at Sir Rupert Hamer's funeral in March 2004. As many members know, Lindsay was in poor health at the time, and he almost physically drew himself up to the lectern and then delivered in a strong voice, without notes, what was a magnificent eulogy and testimony to Dick Hamer. His words drew spontaneous applause from all those who had gathered at St Paul's Cathedral that day.

His 27 years in the Victorian Parliament, a record 24 years as a state cabinet minister — I think the point was made at the state funeral last week that no minister in Victoria's history has served for such a long period of time — and 10 months as Premier meant Lindsay Thompson had a memorable and distinguished political career.

He also had a memorable and wonderful life, closely involved with his church and passionate about the Richmond Football Club and the countless other organisations that he championed over the years. This involvement included 32 years — an extraordinary length of time — as a member of the Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust, including over a decade as chairman. The Great Southern Stand was built at that time, and I am told that Lindsay would often turn up unannounced at the MCG during the construction phase. He would chat to those who were working on the job and see for himself the progress that was being made.

At last week's state funeral service eulogies were delivered by John Howard, Peter Costello and Jeff Kennett, as well as by Murray and David Thompson. Each speech highlighted different aspects of his life and achievements, but the common theme in each of these tributes was that he was an extraordinarily decent and humble man who asked for little but gave so much in return.

Above and beyond his contributions to public life, Lindsay Thompson was a loving and committed family man who took enormous pride in his children and their achievements. On behalf of the Victorian government and the Parliament, I extend my condolences to Lindsay's family — his loving wife, Joan, his children, Heather, Murray and David, and his seven grandchildren. He will be missed by us all.

**Mr BAILLIEU** (Leader of the Opposition) — It is an honour to join the Premier on this motion. Lindsay Thompson was a wonderful, wonderful Victorian. I share the Premier's memory from just four years ago, when Lindsay Thompson delivered the eulogy at the funeral of former Premier Dick Hamer, one of the four giants of the Victorian Liberal Party. It was just a moment in time, but it was also a fitting final tribute from the man who had served Dick Hamer for so long and so loyally as Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party and as minister.

I, like the Premier and many others who were there that day, will never forget that moment. It said as much about Lindsay Thompson as he said then about Dick Hamer. When it came to Lindsay's turn to speak he rose from his pew and made his way forward, and then climbed — step by painful step and ever so slowly — up to the magnificent, elevated carved timber pulpit at St Paul's Cathedral. Given the frail state he was in at the time, many of us feared he might not make it. I remember the collective sense of relief when he finally reached over the top to steady himself with both hands. Just when Lindsay Thompson had all of us anxious and

concerned, just when he had us thinking he might not be up to it, just when he was, once more, being underestimated, he did it again — once more he caught us all off guard; once more he surprised us. He looked up and then, with a theatrical twinkle in his eye, burst forth in that ever-powerful voice that rocked the walls and delivered a beautiful and heartfelt tribute to a mate. It was an extraordinary moment.

At Lindsay's own funeral last week our colleague, the member for Sandringham, described his father with love and pride as 'an overcomer'. It is a glorious epithet. Lindsay Thompson did it all. He may have surprised many, he may have had to overcome many times, but he did it all, and Victorians have rightly been effusive in their tributes to him in the last two weeks. He was an extraordinary man, and he made a remarkable contribution to Victoria as Premier, as Deputy Premier, as Treasurer, as a minister — including as the longest serving education minister, as a member of Parliament for 28 years, as an educator, as a community leader in nearly 30 organisations, as a church elder, as a serviceman, as a sportsman, as a son, as a husband, as a father, as a grandfather, as a mentor and as a friend. Whatever Lindsay did, he did with enthusiasm and charm. He always radiated that warmth and wisdom.

Deservedly, Lindsay Thompson was widely and deeply respected right across Victoria by all sides of politics, and he was genuinely loved by many. What has been said so many times in recent days and noted over that period is that no-one had a bad word to say about Lindsay Thompson. It is hard to do better than that.

As the Premier said, he was a Warburton boy born in 1923. He was the son of a father and mother who were both schoolteachers, and he was raised in difficult circumstances. After his father died when he was just two, he was raised by a mother who was herself a teacher and who had an eye on politics. Lindsay won himself a scholarship to Caulfield Grammar and became both school captain and dux. As the Premier reminded us, he served in the Australian Imperial Force as a signaller from 1942 to 1945, predominantly in New Guinea. He returned, graduated from Melbourne University with two degrees, arts and education, and then took to teaching with a relish, first at Malvern Central School and then at Melbourne High School. Despite various bouts of serious illness, Lindsay's commitment to education continued and he served on the council of Melbourne University for five years to 1959.

But Lindsay Thompson was always drawn to the port of politics. He joined the Liberal party in 1947 and

sought preselection, albeit unsuccessfully, on a number of occasions. He was finally elected to the upper house in 1955 at the old age of 32, and was at the time the youngest member ever elected. He served in the upper house until 1970, as a member for Higinbotham Province until 1967 and then as a member for Monash Province. In 1970 he was elected to the lower house as the member for Malvern, where he served until 1982 — an extraordinary 28 years in this parliament.

As a politician, he has a remarkable record. Assistant Chief Secretary and Assistant Attorney-General at the age of 35, Minister of Housing and Minister of Forests for more than six years, minister in charge of Aboriginal welfare for three years, Minister of Education for more than 12 years from 1967, Minister for Police and Emergency Services for three years, Treasurer for nearly four years, Deputy Premier to Dick Hamer for 10 years, and of course Premier. He was Premier for only 10 months, inheriting the leadership from Dick Hamer following 27 years of unbroken Liberal government at a time of great political difficulty. He may have lost the 1982 election but not for want of his own effort. As the Premier has reminded us, it is reported that even Henry Bolte was moved to say, 'Lindsay is and always will be a great bloke but he did not have a chance'. The tide had simply gone out on Victoria's longest serving government.

Lindsay Thompson's achievements in office are too numerous to detail, but there is no doubt his quiet but determined education reforms won the confidence of the whole community. His 1969 book, *Looking Ahead in Education*, was crafted from his own experience and research, and it firmly established his credentials. It also gave him the strength to work more closely with teachers to implement significant reforms — and he did — and to embark on a substantial building program. As Acting Premier at the time, he decisively resolved disputes over the construction of the Newport power station. As Treasurer, he pushed successfully for a better deal for Victoria, using tactics often repeated today.

Lindsay Thompson loved to stay in touch. He was a prolific letter writer from an era in which correspondence was often the measure of a relationship. He was never short of good counsel and ideas. Like many others, I was delighted to receive my share of his missives correctly and carefully typed and with 'L. H. S. Thompson' delicately signed over his name. I was delighted when Jeff Kennett warmly recalled last week Lindsay's habit of using the letters of someone's name to map out their character. We all remember it well. Jeff's shorthand version summed up the Lindsay Thompson he knew as simply L. H. S. T, a man of

loyalty, humility, service and trust. No-one would disagree, but I have always had my own version. For me, L. H. S. Thompson was always 'legendary handshake'. Lindsay was a man of slight build, even in the best of times. He had battled various conditions throughout his life, including suffering the after-effects of malaria from his service in New Guinea. In later years — and I mean no disrespect — he was positively skinny. But his handshake was his secret weapon — a steel clamp disguised in a zephyr of a man. He was a lethal combination of burning eyes, a broad smile and a devastating grip designed to disarm the innocent. The unsuspecting would never forget — and he never lost the art. Lindsay Thompson's frame was never big enough for his heart. There was never a cathedral too vast for his voice, and there was never a hand too big to crush in a greeting. For me, the L. H. S. in Lindsay Thompson's name will always shout, 'Beware the legendary handshake'.

However, as the Premier reminded us, no account of Lindsay Thompson's life would be complete without mention of the Faraday kidnapping. In October 1972, when six schoolchildren and their teacher at Faraday State School were abducted and held hostage, Lindsay Thompson, as Minister of Education, stepped in without hesitation to deliver a ransom. In doing so he placed himself in singular danger. When the hostages were eventually freed, Lindsay Thompson was rightly the recipient of a bravery award, and five years later the events were repeated at Wooreen. Those events have been much celebrated, but I know that Lindsay never boasted about his role and nor did he regard himself as a hero. In his eyes he was simply doing his duty.

Lindsay and Joan Poynder married in 1950. It has been a lifelong union of great love and support. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Joan for the extraordinary contribution she made over so many years and indeed continues to make. I never, ever had a conversation with Lindsay Thompson without his mentioning Joan. At Lindsay's funeral last week the Australian Children's Choir sang a magnificent Randall Stroope version of *Lux Aeterna* — light everlasting. It was an outstanding and moving performance. For me, and I am sure many others, that was for Joan.

Much has been said of Lindsay Thompson's love of sport. He loved few things more than his 33-year association with the Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust. In the great cauldron of competition and youth and public attention that is the MCG, Lindsay was in his element. He was passionate about the Richmond Football Club and loved the label 'Tiger' that he sometimes attracted. But he was equally committed to cricket, tennis and golf. I had the pleasure on a number

of occasions of playing golf with him. He was a delight on the course. He never hit the ball out of sight, but it was always straight, and accordingly he was always very competitive.

Some 10 years ago Lindsay suffered shocking injuries in a serious car accident. From memory, he was driving north to New South Wales or Queensland. He was, frankly, fortunate to survive, and it was months before he recovered, but in an act of great strength and courage he agreed to attend and briefly speak at a Liberal Party state council meeting not long after the accident. During the address you could hear a pin drop; essentially it was a thankyou to his many well-wishers. But Lindsay was again self-effacing, and with typical arid but good humour he closed by asking his party one further question, 'Why won't anyone go driving with me anymore?'.

In a letter not so long ago Lindsay gave me three pieces of advice. I do not want to go into any detail, but the first was very sage advice on what to do with the Attorney-General, the second involved policy and the third involved the coalition. He was, I am sure, right on all three. He closed with a typically cheeky reference to the fortunes of the Geelong Football Club and former Tiger Brad Ottens. I am pleased to say he was wrong on both of those counts. Then he signed off, once again self-effacing and humble, and I quote:

Finally, if a decrepit old man can be of assistance at any time in any way, please don't hesitate to call upon me.

Lindsay Thompson may have been slight of stature, but he was never decrepit. He overcame it all. He never stopped offering his assistance, and he never failed to answer the call for his family, his state or his nation.

He will be remembered for many things, but principally and without question he will be remembered as a thoroughly decent, dedicated and determined Victorian. He was a very proud member of the Liberal Party and of this place, and his success reminds us all of the quality of friendship and family and the triumph of the wise and unpretentious.

Our love and thoughts are with Joan, Murray, David and Heather and their families, and we thank them for sharing him with all of us.

**Honourable members** — Hear, hear!

**Mr HULLS** (Attorney-General) — Lindsay Thompson was a window to another era of decency, integrity, humility and unassuming courage. Lindsay Thompson embodied those qualities that do not always get press in contemporary Australia. As we become

more and more consumed by celebrity for celebrity's sake, today is an opportunity to salute a man who was the original quiet achiever — a man who, from relatively humble beginnings, put himself through university, served in the armed forces and gave almost his entire working life to the service of his state.

As the youngest member at the time to be elected to the Legislative Council in 1955, as we have heard, Lindsay Thompson went on to give 27 years as a member of Victoria's Parliament — first in the Council and then in the Assembly — holding the record as the longest serving minister in this state's history. That in itself deserves accolades. I love my cabinet colleagues, but to be meeting with them every week for 24 years would no doubt be something to behold!

Lindsay Thompson certainly served this state with distinction. So too were his achievements in office distinctive. From overseeing the construction of much of Melbourne's public housing as Minister of Housing, to his period as a workaholic Treasurer with an eye for detail and a sound head for figures, Lindsay Thompson had a vision — a real vision — for the long term.

Education, however, was where his heartfelt passion lay. He believed education was the terrain from which a nation truly took shape. In his inaugural speech to the Parliament he identified an urgent need to respond to the growing numbers of students through an ambitious school construction and teacher recruitment policy. Sure enough, upon becoming education minister some 12 years later, he set about doubling the number of state schools under a massive expansion of the system. In addition he gave greater power to school councils, he pioneered the migrant English teacher scheme, he expanded language programs and he put emphasis on developing community education projects.

Despite all these achievements, what most distinguished Lindsay Thompson was the nature of the man himself — and that has been well spoken about by both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. I know something of it personally, given that he and my late father, Frank, developed a friendship in the early days of Lindsay Thompson's ministerial career when my father performed conveyancing work under the government's public housing program.

My father often described him as a man of incredible decency. He was not surprised, then, when Lindsay Thompson gained international recognition during the 1972 Faraday school kidnapping — not because of the headlines he generated, but because of the unassuming and selfless way he was ready to put his own safety on the line. My father would have been equally

unsurprised to hear what was said of Lindsay Thompson at his funeral — that no cross word about another was heard from him nor a negative word heard about the man himself. All of us could testify that in politics that is a very rare achievement.

Lindsay Thompson set an extraordinary example in every role he occupied. As someone privileged to hold not only a ministry in the Victorian government but also the deputy premiership, I am full of admiration for the legacy he leaves. His love of Victoria was palpable and came second only to his enduring faith, his beloved Tigers and most of all of course his adored family.

To his wife, Joan, his three children — one of whom of course sits opposite as the member for Sandringham — their partners and their children, I extend my unreserved sympathies on the loss of someone who cherished you and who was cherished in return.

I know he was fond of sporting analogies, so we salute Lindsay Thompson's contribution to the life of this great state not just as a Victorian Premier but as a premier Victorian.

**Mr RYAN** (Leader of The Nationals) — I rise on this occasion on behalf of The Nationals to speak in support of the motion which has been moved by the Premier and supported by the Leader of the Opposition and the Attorney-General.

Lindsay Thompson was an absolute prince of a man. He was born on 15 October 1923 and passed away on 16 July this year. He was aged 84 years. He served this Parliament faithfully from 1955 until 1982, a period of 27 years. In that time he provided distinguished service to this place not only within its walls but beyond. He is particularly remembered, of course, in relation to issues surrounding education.

The Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Attorney-General have spoken eloquently about the background of Lindsay Thompson, so I want to concentrate my comments around three particular areas. The first one I will reflect upon is the maiden speech he made in Parliament on 16 June 1955, when he referred in principal part to his strong interest in education. In so doing he was reflecting on his professional skills and the contribution he made in that sphere throughout that time of his life, but also of course offering a commentary which was a portent of things to come. He said in part:

In the 167 years of this country's history we have tilled the fields, obtained valuable minerals from the ground, and built and factories and cities, but where in fact does the true wealth of a nation lie? Undoubtedly it is in the character of its people,

and the education system of the state must surely be the most important factor in moulding that national character. A high standard of education is particularly necessary in a democratic country because effective government in a democracy presupposes an enlightened and politically conscious people.

Lindsay Thompson lived out his commitment to those important ideals during his time in this place and most particularly his period as the Minister of Education.

The second specific area to which I want to refer is in regard to the well-documented history of the events surrounding the kidnappings that occurred in 1972 and then again in 1977. As has been related, the kidnapping at Faraday occurred in 1972. Six children and their teacher were kidnapped by two individuals, Eastwood and Boland. It was Lindsay Thompson who offered himself to go to Woodend with \$1 million by way of ransom and to make it available to these two fools on the basis of enabling those who had been kidnapped to go free. As it happened those who had been kidnapped were able to escape, so the exchange never occurred, but suffice it to say Lindsay Thompson put his life on the line, as subsequent events aptly demonstrated.

Those subsequent events occurred in 1977. By that stage, I might say, I was practising law in Sale. It was in Gippsland that the second kidnapping event occurred. Eastwood, who can best be described as a madman, had escaped and again indulged in kidnapping. In this instance he took a number of children, a teacher and two others and again demanded that a ransom be made available. He was on the run when Lindsay Thompson, without telling anybody, decided to make himself available in exchange for those who had been kidnapped. The police at Sale set up a road block at a little place called Woodside, not far south of Sale. I learnt from speaking with them subsequently that the events that transpired were of a horrifying nature.

Eastwood, apparently driving a kombi van, crashed the road block which had been set up by the police and continued driving in a northerly direction along the highway towards Sale. The police were able to fire some shots, and they got some shells into the engine of the kombi van, which began to leak oil. Eastwood kept driving and eventually made his way to what is known as the swing bridge near the confluence of the Latrobe and, coincidentally, the Thomson rivers. It was then that the kombi van ran out of gas — literally — and stopped on the side of the road. A member of the CIB (criminal investigation branch), whom I recall as being Stan McCabe, then risked his own life by advancing on that kombi van, firing shots as he did so. Eastwood put his hand out of the window of the vehicle and fired shots in return. Thankfully Stan was not hit, but

Eastwood suffered a wound to his leg and eventually succumbed.

The point of all of this is that it demonstrates that Lindsay Thompson put his life on the line. Who knows what would have happened had he ever had the terrible misfortune to confront this madman, Eastwood. He may well have lost his own life, and yet he selflessly, for a second time, offered himself for the purpose of freeing those who were kidnapped.

The third issue that I want to speak to particularly is at the other end of the scale of this wonderful man's life, and it demonstrates the nature of this great gentleman to whom I refer, this great parliamentarian. Earlier this day I spoke with Pat Sablyak and Maggie Sutherland. Putting it discreetly, these are two of our most senior members of Hansard. I wanted to talk to them because they have very fond memories of the time that Lindsay Thompson spent in this place — and it is informative to speak with them. We have all heard the stories — and they have been repeated today and will be again, with every justification — about what a great man Lindsay Thompson was, but to speak with these two ladies, who, amongst others, had the responsibility in Hansard of recording the words that the member said, is to take things to another level. Even to mention his name to them is to bring forth a smile.

They talk of him as having an absolutely extraordinary memory. They use the expression 'miraculous'. They describe him delivering second-reading speeches which comprised in part reference to the written word but also off-the-cuff commentary that he would inject into those second-reading speeches. He would speak in great detail about individual grants that had been made to specific schools. He would recall conversations which he had had with individuals relating to the education system, none of it contained within the written words but all of it recalled absolutely faithfully from his memory. They describe him as being a great gentleman and as being absolutely charming.

Interestingly they also say that he was a very good dancer. They tell me — —

**Mr Baillieu** interjected.

**Mr RYAN** — They do. He was a very good dancer. To have that commentary come from that source reflects the fact, as I am told by them, that the Hansard end-of-year functions were just wonderful. I am also told that it was Lindsay Thompson, when he was Premier, who instigated an arrangement which the Premier of the day may well be interested in — that is, that during late-night sittings he would arrange for

supper to be delivered to the members of Hansard. Not surprisingly they remember him very fondly but very particularly in the context of that eternal smile.

Lindsay was married to Joan for 57 years, and he is survived by Joan, by David, by our great friend Murray, the member for Sandringham, by Heather and by seven much-loved grandchildren. The accident in 2000 cost Lindsay a lot from a physical perspective; he and Joan suffered horrific injuries. I think it can fairly be said that it took an enormous amount from him from a physical perspective but absolutely nothing in the sense of his intellectual capacity and that remarkable mind to which I have referred.

The last occasion on which I had conversation in any depth with Lindsay was at the cricket earlier this year in the course of a one-day match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. He was accompanied by David. We had a yarn, and he was his usual remarkable self. He will be remembered as not only a gentleman in the usual sense of that expression but also as a gentle man. He was a man of great humour, of keen mind and possessed of a remarkable memory. He was a humanitarian. He was a wonderful servant of the people of Victoria and a great servant of the Liberal Party. He was courageous in the true sense of the word. He was a thoroughly decent bloke. Apart from all of that, he will be remembered and loved as a wonderful husband, as a father and grandfather. Victoria has lost a great member of its own state, but we have also lost a great Australian.

**Mr BATCHELOR** (Minister for Community Development) — I join with the leaders and other members of the Victorian Parliament to pay my respects to Lindsay Thompson and offer my condolences to his wife, Joan, his children and the extended family. Our special thoughts today are with the member for Sandringham.

It is really an honour to speak on this condolence motion for Lindsay Thompson. Lindsay Thompson made a remarkable contribution to both community and political life here in Victoria; and, as we have heard, decency was the hallmark of his period in office, not only in his public life but also in his community works and in his family life.

After completing his military service as a signaller in the Australian Army during the Second World War, Lindsay returned to Australia and graduated from Melbourne University with degrees in arts and education. He began teaching at the Malvern Central School in 1951 and moved to a teaching position at Melbourne High School in 1953. After a short time as a teacher, Lindsay entered the Victorian Parliament in

1955 and he would go on to represent the people of Victoria, as a member of Parliament, for a remarkable period of time. As the Premier said, it was over 10 000 days — in fact 10 172 days. It is a remarkable contribution that he has made to public life.

Lindsay Thompson began his career in the Legislative Council as a member for Higinbotham Province and then Monash Province. In 1970 he moved to the Legislative Assembly as the member for Malvern. Lindsay's parliamentary career got off to a quick start when he became secretary of the cabinet about a year after being elected to Parliament. During his lengthy service as a parliamentarian, Lindsay Thompson held a tremendously wide range of ministerial appointments covering education, Treasury, Aboriginal welfare, housing, forests, and police and emergency services. In total Lindsay Thompson served 7562 days as a minister in the Victorian government. He retains the record as the longest serving minister in Victoria, and I doubt that it will ever be surpassed.

During this time Lindsay showed an enormous commitment to public life and the welfare of Victorians. He had a genuine interest in using his talents for public good. Lindsay may be best remembered for his long service as Minister of Education between 1967 and 1979. It was an eventful period in a whole range of different ways. Lindsay Thompson displayed great courage during the Faraday school kidnapping when he stood ready to exchange the \$1 million ransom for the primary school teacher and her young students. Lindsay Thompson showed no hesitation at that time in putting the children and the families involved first and his courage was recognised subsequently by the Royal Humane Society in its awarding him a bronze medal for bravery.

But Lindsay Thompson's time as Minister of Education should also be remembered for his commitment to improving the educational outcomes of Victorians. He oversaw an immense period of expansion of state education at a time when the number of schools actually tripled. He was passionate about the value of education and worked hard to implement his vision. In fact his passion for education was the centrepiece of the first speech that he ever made in Parliament. Lindsay Thompson replaced Sir Rupert Hamer as the Premier of Victoria in 1981, and led the government for some 308 days until the next election.

In recent days many of Lindsay's former colleagues have said that they have never heard Lindsay Thompson say a nasty thing about another politician. He carried this generous spirit into community life. It is interesting that this attitude and his decency were

remarked on by many today and in the service at St Paul's Cathedral. Outside politics Lindsay Thompson was well known, well liked and an active member of his local community. Those who attended the state service held for him last week would have heard of his loyalty, courage and humility.

Lindsay Thompson received many awards, and was made an Officer of the Order of Australia on Australia Day 1990 for his service to government and politics in the Victorian Parliament. Upon his retirement from Parliament he continued as chairman of the Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust and president of the Royal Life Saving Society Australia, Victoria branch. As chairman of the MCG Trust for some 32 years, Lindsay Thompson played a key role in monitoring the management of the MCG, including the construction of the light towers in 1985 and the Great Southern Stand in 1992. His involvement with the community continued right throughout his life. He was a passionate supporter of the Richmond Football Club, was involved with the East Malvern Uniting Church and was a fan of cricket, tennis and golf.

Lindsay Thompson was a principled man who was respected by his colleagues. During the nearly 30 years in which he served the Victorian Parliament he made an enormous contribution to the state of Victoria. I once again offer my condolences to his family.

**Ms ASHER** (Brighton) — I, too, wish to join in this debate and pay my respects to Lindsay Thompson. The basic facts in relation to Lindsay's career have been well covered by other speakers. They highlighted his long-serving role as a cabinet minister, his role as Premier and his life pre-politics; therefore I want to make my observations very brief, almost in inverse proportion to my respect for Lindsay Thompson.

Firstly, I reiterate the comments that have been made about Lindsay's formidable mind and his capacity to be such a powerful speaker. My earliest recollections of Lindsay are of his role at the 1976 Liberal Party state council. His role was to introduce the Premier, and that is nearly always a role which is given to the deputy. Many deputies seize the opportunity to be in front of their own political party's state council but never Lindsay. Lindsay always made huge reference to Dick Hamer's capacities, made Dick the focus of state council and provided the perfect introduction for the Premier. I remember Lindsay in later times being on a crusade to achieve a fairer funding allocation for Victoria — a point mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition. I have heard a similar speech from every Treasurer since then, although I must say that Lindsay's speeches were always more eloquent than those made

by others — including those from my own side! He also had an extraordinary passion for education, and I think it was probably on that topic that he made his best presentations. Lindsay was best known for being Premier, but he was an incredibly loyal deputy to Dick Hamer during the period from 1972 to 1981 — and I know that Dick felt very strongly about his own capacity to do the job as Premier because of the loyalty of his no. 2.

Much has been said about Lindsay's decency and humility. I, for one, do not think you can say enough about those qualities, because they were such enormous and driving characteristics of his personality and in his political career. In many ways we consider with wonderment that someone so decent and humble can achieve the highest offices in what sometimes can be a fairly rough game. I also want to make an observation about Lindsay's appearance of frailty versus his unbelievable physical strength, intellectual strength and strength within. I can assure the house that Lindsay's bone-crushing handshake showed no discrimination on the basis of gender. I remember it vividly. I, for one, was incredibly relieved when the political kiss came into vogue, because I was relieved of having to explain to Lindsay that I did not need my hand crushed yet again and that I was very happy to see him.

I also want to refer to something that was referred to at the service by former Premier Jeff Kennett, by the Leader of the Opposition and by many others — that is, the famous eulogy Lindsay delivered for Dick Hamer in 2004. Anyone who was there would recall the way Lindsay hauled himself up that pulpit and gave one of the most powerful eulogies I have ever heard.

I felt moved to write to Lindsay. I was aware that he loved correspondence. He had written to me on many occasions over the years, so I wrote to him and obviously I overplayed the issue of his frail stair climbing and probably underplayed the importance of the eulogy itself, because Lindsay wrote back to me, very promptly, on 6 April 2004 and completely dominating his letter was the worth and the wonderful contribution of Dick Hamer to public life. In relation to his so-called stair climbing he gave me the following observation: 'Don't worry about the stair climbing, as it's exactly the slow motion style I use when playing golf'. He was renowned for those sorts of comments.

I wish to express my condolences to Joan, to my parliamentary colleague the member for Sandringham, Murray Thompson, and Theana, and of course to David and Heather.



**Ms PIKE** (Minister for Education) — On 16 July we lost a great Victorian. Not only was Lindsay Thompson Victoria's 40th Premier, but as we have heard he was this state's longest serving education minister, with a lifelong passion for education.

In the years between 1967, when he was first sworn in as education minister, and 1979 Lindsay Thompson initiated the revitalisation of a very neglected and run-down public education system. As we have heard, during his tenure the number of government schools in Victoria was significantly expanded. The regionalisation of the administration of the sector was put into place, and as the Deputy Premier has said, a number of very important specialist programs were also initiated.

Of course he was also the great champion of the role of women in education, and under his stewardship more women were promoted to senior ranks of the teaching profession, including the first entry of women into the principal class. In those 12 years as education minister and throughout his parliamentary career and beyond, Lindsay gained the respect and admiration of both sides of politics, but as an education minister I can assure people that he was greatly admired and loved by the departmental staff and by many teachers still within the teaching profession, and he was also greatly admired by the union movement.

As we have heard many times today, the incident that particularly marked his time as education minister was the Faraday Primary School kidnapping. I think the *Age* spoke about this very poignantly in one of the many tributes by saying:

The photograph of the lone Thompson standing anxious but resolute in the dawn gloom remains one of the most familiar and evocative Australian press images of the 1970s.

There is no doubt in our minds that the bravery was informed by his concern for the welfare of those six children and their very young, 19-year-old teacher, and in a way this incident became a metaphor for the whole of his tenure as education minister — Lindsay Thompson simply had an overriding concern for and commitment to protecting and improving the lives of all Victoria's children.

Lindsay remained associated with the education sector through his patronage of the prestigious Lindsay Thompson Fellowship, which was established in 1998 and continues to be auspiced by the Victorian government. This fellowship, which raises awareness of the direct link between teachers' professional development and improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in the education system in

Victoria, was presented annually by Lindsay at the education excellence awards. The \$50 000 travel and research fellowship has been much sought after by government teachers, and its presentation by Lindsay was always a highlight at the education excellence awards ceremony. It was at these ceremonies that Lindsay's many qualities of integrity, dignity and humility were displayed, not to forget his sense of humour, which people very much looked forward to.

Despite his failing health, Lindsay got himself out of bed and came along to this year's awards in May — much to Joan's chagrin. He was determined to be there, and he delighted the audience with his ability to remember, off by heart, the long list of recent winners. His speeches at this celebration of teacher excellence were always highly anticipated and always very humorous, and I think this time he reminded everyone that he had brought his new girlfriend, Joan, along with him to enjoy the occasion.

As we have heard, Lindsay Thompson was a gentleman in every sense of the word. But he was more. He was also a man of great vision. The Leader of the Opposition has reminded us of his book, *Looking Ahead in Education*, written while he was education minister and published in 1969. This book listed some 65 recommendations regarding the future of education in Victoria, and it is a testament to his interest and vision that by the 1990s the majority of those recommendations had been implemented.

Lindsay Thompson's death is a huge loss to the education sector and of course to us all here in Victoria. To his wife Joan, and children, Heather, our colleague Murray, and David, we send our sincere condolences.

**Mr DIXON** (Nepean) — It is an honour to say a few words about Lindsay Thompson, a great Victorian, a great Liberal and most importantly a great parliamentarian.

I first met Lindsay when he came to see me with an issue about a park down in Portsea. The family holiday home was nearby, and he was concerned that the park was going to be taken over by developers and the community would lose a great asset and a place where he liked to walk the dogs and play with his grandchildren. I could not believe it, because I was just a new member of Parliament and here was an ex-Premier coming to see me about the local park. He was quiet, he was persistent and he followed it up with me, and I know that there still is a park, and I think that is due in no small way to Lindsay's quiet persistence, not only with me but also with the local council. He always had a word of encouragement for me every time

I met him, and many people have spoken about his beautiful nature.

It may have been Murray that mentioned at the funeral that he treated everybody the same, whether they be a captain of industry, a political leader or just a man in the street. It was just coincidental that I found out when talking to one of the parliamentary drivers just a few weeks before he died that he was held in great esteem by his drivers too. He always had a word of encouragement or a joke for them. He knew their families, he knew their backgrounds, and he just took up where he left off. Even if the drivers swapped around, he remembered them all, and I know he was greatly admired by them.

Of course Lindsay's greatest contribution was to education, and the Minister for Education has spoken about that. That contribution came from the very strong teaching background that he had himself, his teacher training and very importantly his teacher experience, but also from the fact that he came out of a teaching family and an extended family that had a great love for and understanding of the importance of education.

When I read his inaugural speech I saw that the first policy area he actually touched on was education. You could tell straight away that this was the policy area that was dearest to his heart. I read with some amusement that he congratulated the government on doubling the maintenance expenditure on schools. Maintenance is always an issue, will remain an issue and was an issue in schools even that far back.

The minister also spoke about the Lindsay Thompson Fellowship, which is just incredible. The excellence awards are a bit of a saga to sit through at times, but everyone looks forward to Lindsay's presentation and speech. There was always the element of humour, there was always the Richmond Football Club and there was always Joan mentioned in the speeches. With his incredible understanding and remembering of all the past awardees and what they had been doing — I think he must have rung them up to find out what they had done since they received their award — he delivered a wonderful speech, and it was much anticipated.

This year it was incredibly moving when Lindsay came up to the stage and spoke. You could just feel the love in the room, basically. There was cheering. There were so many young people there who would not even know of his political background, but there was this aura about the man and his legendary status within education. The rousing applause and the cheering he received were something more than the combined applause for all the winners and all the distinguished

guests. It was a wonderful way to remember Lindsay at one of his final public appearances.

Lindsay's belief in the importance of education to society and about how important an investment in Victoria that education is, but most importantly in the nobleness and the importance of the teaching profession — the way he practised that belief as a teacher and while he was education minister — is a value that all of us as educational leaders and political leaders should always take on board and remember.

I would like to extend my condolences to Lindsay's family, especially to my colleague Murray and his family, Theana, Alex, Alithea and Theo. I am sure Lindsay would have been very proud of his family's contribution and participation at his funeral where all members of the family showed so much love and strength, and they were all so articulate. You could tell that they were related to Lindsay Thompson. May he rest in peace.

**Ms KOSKY** (Minister for Public Transport) — Rightly, much has been said about Lindsay Thompson's personal qualities of integrity, modesty and decency. Today I would like to join with others in paying tribute to Lindsay as an educator and particularly to recognise his relentless and unflagging commitment to public education.

Much has been said about his background, and I will not go through that, but in my five years as minister for education I got to know Lindsay through the award program that has been mentioned and the Lindsay Thompson Fellowship award. I remember the first time I went to one of those dinners. As a new minister you spend quite a bit of time on the speech that you are going to give to the teachers. I did not need to do that because everyone looked forward to Lindsay's speech, which, as has been mentioned, was full of humour, wisdom and lots of stories that were important to the people in the room. Everyone each year used to look forward to not only the award but also to Lindsay's interest in the recipients of the award and his ongoing interest in education. It has been mentioned that Lindsay was Minister of Education for 12 years. I remember when I asked him how long he had been education minister he said, with that twinkle in his eye, 'Twelve very long years'. But I know he loved each and every one of them.

In his contribution the member for Nepean said he thought Lindsay probably followed up with the recipients of the awards. I can assure the member that Lindsay did, because when I met the recipients later they said that they had taken a phone call from Lindsay.

He would follow up and see how they were going in terms of their fellowship, their research, the work that they were doing, their findings and how they were putting that work into their own education and their own schools. It says a lot about his interest in education but also in his interest, I believe, about teachers and students and that whole process.

The annual dinner was a reflection of his ongoing commitment in that process. Teachers loved his personal involvement. As I said, he would phone them before giving out new awards, and as they were travelling around the world he would make contact with them to see how they were going. Lindsay and Joan would send letters to me after those dinners and the many conversations that we had. It is a tribute to the man that he was always prepared to say thank you. I looked forward to receiving those letters with the trademark signature at the end, and I maintained contact with him whilst I was minister for education.

What is most important about Lindsay is that he loved people, and that is why he followed up with people. He loved their stories, which became part of his background and his story as well. Obviously education was critical to that, but it was also part of his political life. Much has been said about the way he treated others, and that is because he really did love being involved in people and he was as much interested in their backgrounds and their passions as he was in his own passions.

I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to the Thompson family, to Lindsay's family, especially his wife, Joan, who I got to know as well through those award evenings, to our colleague Murray and also to Heather and David.

**Mr O'BRIEN** (Malvern) — Having the honour to represent the electorate of Malvern in this place I am particularly pleased to speak on this condolence motion for the most distinguished of my predecessors. Lindsay Thompson represented the people of Malvern with distinction between 1970 and 1982. This was only a part of his extraordinary parliamentary career that commenced in 1955 in the other place. The affection in which he has been held by his constituents is something which is made plain to me on an almost daily basis. His essential decency inspired the respect of people from all walks of life. I had the privilege to speak with Lindsay Thompson on a number of occasions. He was as generous with his time as he was wise in his counsel, and he has the most tremendous memory for people, places, dates, times and faces that put me to shame.

Lindsay's teaching career started at Malvern Central School. It was there that he had one of his first, but certainly not last, encounters with the teacher unions in this state. Having been asked to coach the school cricket team, Lindsay was putting the boys through their paces after school until about 5.45 p.m., and a teacher on the staff who was a member of the Victorian Teachers Union suggested to Lindsay in no uncertain terms that he should knock off by no later than 4.00 p.m. As Lindsay recounted in his autobiography:

I thanked him politely for his advice and informed him that other members of staff could decide what time they left the school but that I would decide what time I ended the school day. My reply was repeated to other staff members, and for a while I was not too popular.

However, as the year progressed three other young teachers joined the staff, and I succeeded in winning them over to my way of thinking. We used to tease the union representative at 4.05 p.m. about his late departure and offer to call him a taxi.

This episode illustrates the dedication to serving those in his charge that was the hallmark of Lindsay Thompson.

Lindsay served his country in the army and later endured five operations for complications from malaria contracted in New Guinea while on active service. Lindsay also endured four unsuccessful preselections before finally entering Parliament as the member for Higinbotham Province in 1955. He was nothing if not determined, and as the member for Sandringham said in his eulogy, he was a great overcomer.

Lindsay's parliamentary career was unprecedented in this state. He served as a minister longer than anyone else in the history of Victoria, as has been stated by other members, but it was, of course, as Minister of Education between 1967 and 1979 that Lindsay had his greatest impact. He was a great builder of schools, he opened up the teaching service and he was committed to quality in education. This occasionally brought him into conflict with the teacher unions of the day, but despite his courteous manner, Lindsay Thompson had a spine of steel. He stood firm in the face of not only political threats but even death threats. His courage in the circumstances of the Faraday and Wooreen kidnappings is the stuff of legends, as was very well recounted by the Leader of The Nationals.

This is not to say that Lindsay Thompson could not be diplomatic when the occasion demanded. In his autobiography he recounted his meeting with then President Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines, which took place on the fairways of Kingston Heath Golf Club in 1967. Teeing off being scheduled for 5.45 in the morning to meet the president's flight schedule,

Marcos arrived with his entourage of advisers, official photographers, armed bodyguards, a caddy, an assistant caddy and a scorer. Lindsay was there with his then 13-year-old son, better known to us now as the honourable member for Sandringham. After a round in which the president blamed his bad shots on letting his thoughts drift back to the communists in his country, the official scorer presented the card for Lindsay's signature. In Lindsay's words:

I found that he had taken three shots off the president's score and added two onto my total. With that minor arithmetical adjustment his master had emerged triumphant. I said to the scorer, obviously a man bent on retaining his job, 'The scoring seems a little loose to me, but in the interests of good international relationships I'll sign the card'.

The mode of counting in the last election in the Philippines suggests that this ingenious scorer may have risen to the rank of chief electoral officer in Manila.

Respected by his colleagues and loyal to them, Lindsay Thompson was elected as deputy to Dick Hamer in 1972 and elected as Premier in 1981. Facing what was by all accounts an almost impossible campaign in 1982, Lindsay Thompson's decency shone through. As he wrote:

It was suggested from time to time during the course of the campaign that I should go for the jugular vein and tear strips off John Cain personally. During my life in politics I had always tried to refrain from personal abuse contests ... If Cain had been a fool or a crook, I would have said so, but he was neither. It seemed to me that if the only way we could win an election was by using personal abuse, then we must be going badly. If that approach makes me a bad politician, well, so be it.

No, that did not make Lindsay Thompson a bad politician. It made him a wonderful human being. It simply reflected what a thoroughly honest, honourable and decent man he was — a man who rejected the whatever-it-takes approach that seems to characterise so much of modern political exchange, a man who lead by example, a man who gave loyalty and inspired it in others, and a man who epitomised the virtue of service above self.

Though Lindsay Thompson will be sorely missed, his legacy will endure. On behalf of my constituents I extend my sincere condolences to Lindsay's wonderful and loving wife, Joan, to their children Murray, David and Heather, and their extended family.

**Mr WYNNE** (Minister for Housing) — I rise to join in this condolence motion for Lindsay Thompson. As many of my colleagues have noted today, Lindsay lived a rich life of service to the Victorian community. Aside from his time as Premier, Lindsay Thompson held the post of Deputy Premier and Treasurer, and he was at various times a minister of education, police and

emergency services, Aboriginal welfare, forests and, of course, housing.

Today I would like to speak to some of the significant achievements Lindsay made as Minister of Housing during the 1960s. Not only was Lindsay Victoria's longest serving Minister of Education, he was also, by a matter of only a few months, Victoria's second longest serving Minister of Housing, a post he held from June 1961 to May 1967. Over his nearly six years in that post — an era described by Peter Costello at Lindsay's funeral as the golden years in Victoria — Lindsay Thompson oversaw a huge reconstruction program that established an international reputation for the then Victorian Housing Commission as the foremost construction authority in Australia in terms of high-rise public buildings.

During his time as minister the Housing Commission completed the construction of many of the iconic high-rise public housing estates we continue to associate with Victoria's public housing system to this day, including the Debney Park estate in Flemington and the Boundary Road estate in North Melbourne, as well as the development and extension of high-rise public housing estates in Carlton, Port Melbourne, Williamstown, Prahran, Collingwood, Fitzroy and Richmond. Of course all of these estates provided housing for workers — housing located close to public transport, close to industry and close to employment.

The optimistic and ambitious nature of this building program is best summed up by the following account of the commission's promotion of the Park Towers project in South Melbourne, which was commenced in 1966 under Lindsay Thompson's leadership and completed in October 1969.

The cover of that year's —

it was the 1968–69 annual report —

featured a futuristic view looking vertically from the entrance court up the facade of Park Towers, the 30-storey high-rise block in South Melbourne. This block was also presented in a colour brochure, which showed it rising romantically above Albert Park Lake and suggesting an enormous parkland setting appropriate to its name. At the time, this block was believed to be the tallest precast load-bearing-wall building in the world. On its completion in October 1969 the building was opened to the public, and throughout one long Sunday thousands of people visited the site and were shown the new flats and the spectacular views. Within the building one looked down on the surrounding ... terrace houses similar to the ones demolished to clear a site for Park Towers. Subsequently, the commission received an architectural award for the building on account of its excellence.

It is important for us to remember the context in which Lindsay Thompson and his colleagues served in the

1960s and to understand their motivations in pursuing these policies. As Lindsay himself said in his 1965 paper, *Victorian Housing Today and Tomorrow*, the overriding aim of housing policy during the 1960s was to cater 'adequately for the housing needs of a population that is increasing as rapidly as any in the Western world'. This is a challenge that members of this house will no doubt be sympathetic to in light of the current extraordinary population boom in Victoria.

There can be little doubt that the advocates of slum reclamation programs were deeply motivated by a desire to relieve the anguish of high rents and poor conditions in Melbourne's inner city. It is in that light that we should reflect on this aspect of Lindsay Thompson's contribution to public life. These high-rise towers continue to play an important role as part of the broader housing stock in Victoria.

I extend my sympathies in particular to the Thompson family, and indeed to Murray, the member for Sandringham — like his father, a very decent man.

**Dr NAPHTHINE** (South-West Coast) — It is an honour and a privilege to join the condolence motion for a great Liberal, a great Victorian and a great Australian in Lindsay Thompson. In the city of Suzhou in the Chinese province of Jiangsu — which has a sister-state relationship with Victoria that was established at the time when Lindsay was Deputy Premier — is a beautiful, World Heritage listed garden: the Garden of the Humble Administrator. It is so named because it was established in the early 1500s by a person with a wonderful record of true public service and enormous humility. If there were such a garden in Victoria, it would be called the Lindsay Thompson Garden to recognise an enormous life of service to our great community and to acknowledge his outstanding humility, decency and loyalty.

Lindsay Thompson was a true gentleman in every sense of the word. I recall that in every meeting I had with Lindsay he was positive and constructive. He would always begin a conversation with a word of praise or recognition of your work. He would often begin by saying, 'I saw you on television last night, and I enjoyed your comments on ...' or, 'I read what you have written about ... and I enjoyed hearing what you had to say'. He would then offer support and encouragement. He would say, 'You and your team are achieving this' or, 'You and your team are kicking some goals here'. That was his style. He would then move on to provide constructive, positive and helpful advice and wisdom in a very humble and genuine way — in a positive way, in a way of genuine help and assistance — which was the nature of the man.

As a member of Parliament who represents a rural electorate, I also acknowledge the enormous contribution Lindsay made to improving educational outcomes in rural Victoria. He did this during his 12 years — a record period — as Minister of Education through a massive investment in new facilities, but more important was his role in building the teaching profession, making it an honour and a privilege for teachers to be teachers and attracting teachers of quality and substance to teach in schools in regional and rural Victoria. He was responsible — significantly, I believe — for changing the culture of education in country areas. Many members here are younger than I am. Many people who grew up in country Victoria went to school until the minimum age, went off to work on the farm, got an apprenticeship or got a job. Lindsay Thompson changed the culture in terms of rural people's attitude to education. He encouraged people to participate in education to the highest level possible and encouraged country people to aspire to undertake tertiary education — whether it be at TAFE or university or in some other form. Lindsay was genuinely responsible for a very real education revolution in country Victoria that provided an enormous personal benefit to many tens of thousands of people across Victoria and made a significant difference to the economy of this great state.

Lindsay Thompson was a man of great achievement, but he was a man of even greater humility. He certainly was a great Liberal, a great Victorian and a great Australian. He will be sadly missed. My condolences go to Joan, to my colleague Murray, to David and Heather, and to their families.

**Ms CAMPBELL** (Pascoe Vale) — I thank previous members for extensively placing on record the vast array of qualities of Lindsay Thompson. I do not intend to repeat what others have already put on the public record.

Whilst I never met Lindsay Thompson, my father-in-law, Jack Campbell, did have that pleasure. Lindsay and Jack shared military service for Australia, an abiding interest in education and the furthering of their tertiary qualifications after the war. The greatest compliment I can give Lindsay Thompson is that upon my election to this place my father-in-law asked me to do only one thing. Before identifying his request, by way of background I highlight that my father-in-law has a proud, lifelong love of the Labor Party and the trade union movement and nobody can shake Jack's love of the Labor Party or the trade union movement.

Jack's request amazed me. It was, 'If you meet Lindsay Thompson, please give him my regards'. I knew

Lindsay Thompson had long left this place. I was aware that sometimes previous members came here, but I did not quite know how I was going to meet Jack's request. Of course I agreed, but I commented that this was an unusual request as I had never heard him once be accused by any other person of saying a decent word about a member of the Liberal Party, let alone such a prominent person in the Liberal Party. Jack's reply was, 'He is a very good man'.

Upon election I introduced myself to Murray Thompson, the member for Sandringham, and I requested that he pass on my father-in-law's regards to his father. During the eulogies at the state funeral, I learnt about what may have been one of the many reasons for one true Labor man's esteem for Lindsay Thompson. I learnt that when the Thompson family were on family holidays their car would stop at what seemed like every second state school. At different times my father-in-law and his young family were at many of those state secondary schools. He was a primary school principal.

To our colleague Murray, to Joan, Heather, David and the grandchildren, sincere condolences to you all. As so many other people have said, I again thank you for sharing your husband, father and grandfather with so many Victorians. Thank you for your contributions in assisting the common good and thank you for sharing what must be such a profound grief with so many of us.

**Mr THOMPSON** (Sandringham) — I trust that you, Speaker, and the house might exercise some forbearance as I endeavour to place some thoughts and reflections of my family's and those of myself on the record in relation to my father's life and 27½ year career in this place, noting that at the end of this parliamentary term the member for Keilor will have passed that length of parliamentary service. As the honourable member and those who come after him would have many stories to tell, I too have got a few thoughts I would like to place on the record. John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* states:

My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles who will be my rewarder.

I would like to draw upon three observations of my father that have come to me in recent times. The first is from a secondary school principal:

I write this note to you on the sad passing of your father. A lot has been written about Lindsay Thompson and his bravery and the respect that all members of Parliament held for him.

My memory is perhaps a little different. I was principal of Rainbow High School (1972–82) which was a little Mallee high school of about 200 students and we had three visits from your father whilst he was Minister of Education.

He came to the school initially to open our assembly hall and later to open the administration block, funded by a direct grant to the school council organised by your father.

Members of the school community lunched with your father and he confided how pleasant it was to visit a school ... where the entire school community worked towards providing a good education. He said that he felt inspired after such a visit to a remote secondary school and he made numerous references to his visit.

In the *Age* of 21 January 1978 your father is quoted as saying, 'Among the schools at which I have recently opened school buildings several stand out. Rainbow High School is one of the best schools in the state, and comes close to being a model of what a school with a high degree of community involvement should be. The school demonstrates the success of intelligently directed self-help and very close relationships between students, staff and parents'.

In the *Rainbow News* after his 1978 visit he is quoted as saying, 'The enthusiasm of the place is infectious. The community involvement is something to be copied by other school communities throughout Victoria. There is no doubt the difference between a good school and a really good school is the willingness to go the extra mile, to forget departmental regulations and time plots and strict requirements, and to decide what's necessary to make a really good school — and this is what we have here at Rainbow'.

The principal went on to note:

The story is perhaps not the headline news of the day, but we felt we had an education minister who was prepared to go the extra mile with us. This school community admired him, many of whom felt they knew him well, and trusted him totally. The lunches attended by community members and senior members in the school hall with this quiet, gentle man will be remembered by many.

On a personal level, after almost 20 years as a principal of high schools in this state, including 10 years at Wangaratta, I can honestly say he was the one minister for education that provided true leadership in what were some of the most difficult times faced by schools in Victoria.

This is really the personal picture of Lindsay Thompson that perhaps is missed in many headlines. We will not forget him and his dedication to his schools and we salute him as a very special person.

Finally, my son is a policeman at the one-man station at Lancefield, and as you enter this small station there is a framed newspaper report of Lindsay Thompson on the wall referring to his action of offering himself for the kidnapped students who were taken in close proximity to Lancefield. He was indeed a man of many parts and they are remembered in a variety of ways in so many small communities.

The Lindsay Thompson I knew will not be forgotten and I thought that you might get some small comfort in knowing how he influenced so many, even in some of our small Mallee communities.

The letter is from Lynton Barr, former principal of Rainbow High School and later of Wangaratta High School. The second observation is from an electorate family:

We read of Lindsay's passing and recognise him as a great Victorian, who made a wonderful contribution to our great state. Men like your father provided inspiration to the branch members like my late mother and the broader Liberal Party.

We are sure that you will miss him greatly but be comforted by his outstanding legacy.

The third comes from an Australian Rhodes scholar who has attended many political and business gatherings in Europe and the United States:

I was impressed by Lindsay's undiminished grasp of detail, encyclopaedic knowledge, and his capacity to translate this into the language of the ordinary man, which those of you knowing him well would recognise as a hallmark of his, all his life.

He added that he had never met anyone with Lindsay's public speaking prowess.

As has been noted, my father was born in Warburton on 15 October 1923. His mother, Ethel Thompson, was a teacher. His father, Arthur Thompson, had commenced to train for the Anglican Church but later worked as a teacher and journalist. Interestingly he had been a candidate at the 1919 federal election. Regrettably he died shortly after Lindsay was born. Lindsay's grandfather had trained as a dentist at Guy's hospital and at the military hospital at Portsmouth in England. In Australia he practised in Balranald, Wentworth and Hay, where he served as mayor.

One of the strongest early influences on Lindsay's life was that of his maternal grandmother, Sarah Lester Mills, a teacher who migrated to Australia from Ireland in 1864. She was one of the first women teachers employed by the Victorian education department, with which she taught for almost 30 years. Together with her four daughters she later established Mentone Girls Grammar School. Lindsay maintained a lifelong association with this school, together with Caulfield Grammar, where he was school captain, dux and captain of the cricket team. The values of self-discipline, of giving one's best in any endeavour and of never shirking responsibility whatever it might be were attributed as principles learnt at school.

He served in the Australian Army in a signals unit in New Guinea. Strong army friendships and his experience of dealing with bureaucracy helped further shape his focus on the common good and the importance of sensible, decentralised decision making. Following the war he was able to enrol at the

University of Melbourne under a returned soldier study scheme, something that he was unable to afford earlier. He was elected to the student representative council and was sports editor for *Farrago*, the student newspaper, changing the then last two pages of politics into a sports section.

After completing an honours degree in arts, majoring in history and politics, he commenced a teaching career at Malvern Central School and was later transferred to Melbourne High School. Lindsay greatly valued the enduring friendships he developed with both fellow staff and students, who took on leadership roles in myriad spheres of Australian community life.

'With malice toward none, with regard towards all. With firmness in the right as God gave him to see the right', and so echoed the words of Abraham Lincoln around my father throughout his life: distinguished student, soldier, university scholar, exemplary teacher, parliamentarian, minister, deputy leader, Premier, patron, chairman, trustee, president, prolific correspondent, brilliant speech maker with an encyclopaedic memory, raconteur, humorist, sportsman, historian, author, doctor of laws, loving husband and father, loyal friend and valiant pilgrim.

My father epitomised the virtues of a civil society, as outlined by the Jewish rabbi Jonathan Sacks — rational reflection and conversation, courage and persistence in the pursuit of ideas and ideals, the capacity to get along with others, and the carefully cultivated disciplines of dialogue and mutual respect for those with whom he disagreed. However, my father was not without his limitations. If given the opportunity to travel the world or go down to Sorrento, he would choose Sorrento. He would reason that if you could go to Sorrento, why would you want to go anywhere else? While maintaining a strong interest in Australian politics, his focus on international events was generally confined to the British Open, the US Open or the Australian test team tour. If given a choice between viewing the Modern Masters, a new exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria, or going down to Albert Park to watch an amateur game of football, he would choose the football.

In the mid-1970s the then Australian Broadcasting Commission kindly invited my father down to the studio to discuss education in a live telecast. It also kindly invited a studio audience of stakeholders, most with a grievance. Question by question my father dealt with each concern raised with intelligence, precision and a detailed understanding. He melded prowess, principle and portfolio command. Subsequently he received an avalanche of correspondence from all over

Victoria expressing admiration for his contribution to public debate, which in this instance was Bradmanesque. On another occasion, as was recounted last week, my father was inspecting the police dog squad. One of the dogs broke rank and bit my father. Dad retold the story, suggesting that some of his parliamentary colleagues had inquired as to whether the dog had been promoted. He also used to joke that another friend had asked if the dog had suffered any ill effects. The photo of the incident became a prizewinner.

Dad also liked to tell a story about his early days on the hustings, when he stood for the seat of Higinbotham in 1955. On one occasion he began to address a handful of people at the Bentleigh shopping centre and the crowd slowly but steadily grew to around 40, which greatly inflated his confidence. Suddenly a large red bus pulled up and the whole crowd filed on to the bus, leaving him addressing a fox terrier. On checking the dog's tag he discovered that the dog did not even live in the electorate.

In a lifetime of unforgettable moments my father regarded the most significant as being when he returned to Australia from New Guinea unannounced towards the end of the war. He had promised his mother through the wire fence of an army camp two years earlier that he would return. As an only child in a single-parent family this was a particularly difficult farewell. He described how upon his return to Australia he made his way to the family home on a Saturday afternoon, entered through an ajar front door, walked down the hallway and came face to face with his mother and aunt in the kitchen. He said that he would never forget the elated expressions on their faces.

There were a number of paradoxes in the life of my father. He was the son of a brilliant scholar, but he never had the chance to know his own father. As a 10-year-old he was not able to make his way into the outer stand of the MCG to watch the football, yet he ended up opening the stadium that he once could not visit. He was dux of his school, yet he could not afford to go to university. He tried to join the commandos and ended up a signaller. He lost five preselections, yet he became the longest serving cabinet minister in Victoria's history and one of the longest serving in Australia. My father was a great overcomer.

An insight into my father is gleaned from a letter he received from his mother 65 years ago, shortly before he headed north from Brisbane with the Australian Army to New Guinea. His mother referred to him as 'dear heart', 'dear son', 'my own loved little son' and, most poignantly, 'dear soul'. She wrote:

So long as you remember —

the love of his grandmother for him —

as well as her favourite 14th chapter —

of the gospel according to St John —

you can never go far wrong. It is a bulwark now and while you live. Steer your own course, wholly irrespective of what anyone else thinks or does. That you have always done from the very earliest and you've been very much blessed by so doing. Never depart from it.

The values that are often spoken about regarding my father's courage during the Faraday kidnapping were really just the outworking of the values that he brought to bear every day of his over 10 000 days of public service as a member of the Parliament in the state of Victoria and, I add, in every other aspect of his life. His faith was of a nature through which in other times and places men and women of faith silently built hospitals, established schools, promoted freedom and were prepared to die for a just cause.

He overcame bureaucracy. He paved the way for the blind to teach. At the funeral, one of my staff was halfway back and spoke to the people in the church at St Paul's and introduced herself. One of the people on her right was the wife of a blind teacher who had been given the opportunity to teach by my father. I remember him narrating the story. The departmental health officer, a doctor, had ruled the teacher unfit to teach, and an appeal was made to the minister. My father called the doctor in and asked, 'Why is this fellow unfit to teach?'. He said, 'Because he cannot see'. My father took the view that if a teacher had the courage and the capacity and the will to further his education, then he would perhaps be a better teacher for that life experience. Subsequently other blind and visually impaired teachers had the opportunity to join the education department.

My father also had the opportunity to enable women to receive equal opportunity in the education department, removing a restriction which had impeded the progress of his grandmother decades earlier. He was a member of a golden age of government which trained and recruited teachers; built schools, public housing and reservoirs; reformed drink-driving laws; facilitated major private sector investment in Victoria; and created jobs. More specifically, in the education portfolio, improvements in education directly attributable to my father as education minister included throughout the 1960s and 1970s an average 1000 new classrooms a year being provided to meet the increasing school population. Between 1967 and 1970 alone the needs of 45 000 additional pupils were fully met with



accommodation and teachers in the state system. There was the introduction of the first regionalisation of schools, involving regional directors, school councils, including local citizens, and the decentralised administration of the education department. By 1978 the overall teacher-to-pupil ratio for the department had been reduced to 1 to 13 compared with 1 to 26 in 1960, despite the big increases in student numbers.

My father played an integral role as a member of a cabinet subcommittee in the early planning and subsequent development of Victoria's second university, Monash. As minister he played key roles in the establishment of the La Trobe and Deakin universities and multicampus universities in regional Victoria, as well as the revolutionary growth of other tertiary education institutions across the state.

My father was also steadfast and resolute, and as Acting Premier he stood up to and overcame the union black bans on building the Newport power station. He was also resolute in invoking the use of the Essential Services Act for the first time ever to solve union bans on milk deliveries. On his retirement from the Parliament of Victoria in October 1982 the *Age* newspaper commented:

He has served with rare decency, dedication and distinction, and for this he deserves the gratitude of Parliament and public.

A key aspect of his public speaking was his extraordinary ability to recall facts and figures. Remarkably throughout his career, even in Parliament, he spoke without notes — a rare, if not unprecedented, feat. Most speeches incorporated his humour, often a self-deprecating remark. Once he passed a shop with a sign out the front that read 'Victorian Premier ill'. He went inside to establish the nature of his illness! Incidents like this were added to his repertoire of stories.

He wrote four publications entitled *Looking Ahead in Education; Victorian Housing, Today and Tomorrow*; his autobiography, *I Remember*, and a paper called *A Fair Deal for Victoria*, which addressed commonwealth-state financial arrangements.

He delighted in his conversations with Victorians from every walk of life across the state, frequently over a cup of tea and a lamington. Family holidays often included tours of country schools, public buildings or impromptu conversations with somewhat surprised locals. He served on the Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust for 33 years, including serving as chairman for 12 years. He was chairman of the National Tennis Centre from 1994 to 1996 and served on the National Tennis Centre

Trust for a period of over 12 years. He was a life member of the Richmond Football Club and the Royal Life Saving Society Australia Victoria Branch, of which he served as president for 26 years. He was also an elder of his local church, Ewing Memorial, for 57 years.

I would like to place on record the gratitude of the family to his heart physician, Dr Elton Fagan at Cabrini Hospital; his palliative care nurse, Maureen Jenkins, who played an integral role in looking after him over the last two and a half years of his life; and also Dr John Griffiths, the orthopaedic surgeon who supervised the transfer of my parents from the Lismore Base Hospital to Cabrini Hospital in 1999.

I would like to place on record the extraordinary support and care of my mother, Joan, for my father throughout his 27-year political career and their married life. In addition to running a political household, she devotedly cared for my father over the last eight years when his health was not in a strong position.

The Seward family, in whose household my father had the privilege of growing up with first cousins, were descendants of John Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*. It might well be said in the words of St Paul that my father, with rare distinction, fought the good fight, finished the race and kept the faith. Following his death the family received many kind notes paying tribute to my father's humility, dedication, compassion, courage, wisdom and foresight. He had a reputation of achieving reform through consensus. He was also described as a man of true political integrity and as a servant of the people. Our family mourns his death, gives thanks for his life and takes courage from his example.

Finally, I add that an understanding of my father would not be complete without recognition of the shepherd and bishop of his soul, Jesus Christ.

**Motion agreed to in silence, honourable members showing unanimous agreement by standing in their places.**

## ADJOURNMENT

**Mr BRUMBY** (Premier) — I move:

That, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honourable Lindsay Hamilton Simpson Thompson, AO, CMG, the house do now adjourn until tomorrow.

**Motion agreed to.**

**House adjourned 3.50 p.m.**

