

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION**

Tuesday, 18 October 2005

(extract from Book 6)

Internet: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard

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FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

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The Hon. ANDREA COOTE

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Tuesday, 18 October 2005

The PRESIDENT (Hon. M. M. Gould) took the chair at 2.03 p.m. and read the prayer.

CONDOLENCES

Hon. Bruce Anthony Chamberlain, AM

Mr LENDERS (Minister for Finance) — I move:

That this house expresses its sincere sorrow at the death on 1 October 2005 of the Honourable Bruce Anthony Chamberlain, AM, and places on record its acknowledgment of the valuable services rendered by him to the Parliament and the people of Victoria as a member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Dundas from 1973 to 1976, a member of the Legislative Council for the Western Province from 1976 to 2002 and as President of the Legislative Council from 1992 to 2003.

It is unusual when a house condoles a former member to find that so many members of the house served with that person or so many people who work in a place served with him as a leader of a workplace or as a leader of a parliamentary institution. It is worth reflecting, President, that the vast majority of members here — 32 of the 44 members of the Legislative Council — served with Bruce in a previous Parliament and the others were obviously introduced to him, if they did not already know him, in the early months of this Parliament when he continued in his term as President.

Bruce Chamberlain was a member of the Legislative Assembly, as the motion says, for the electoral district of Dundas from 1973 to 1976, which of course included his beloved Hamilton. When that electorate was abolished, he was elected as a member for Western Province from 1976 to 2002.

For the record, in addition to his presidency of the Legislative Council from 1992 to 2003, I would also like to put on record some of the other formal positions he had in this place which I am sure will be alluded to by many other members in their address on this condolence motion.

He was Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council from 1986 to 1988 as well as holding a large number of spokesman and shadow ministerial portfolios during his time in this house. He was a member of the Company Takeovers Committee from 1976 to 1979; he was a member of the Legislative Council Standing Orders Committee from 1976 to 2002. Bruce loved the institution of Parliament, but by anyone's terms that was a marathon effort, and the committee he chaired provided new plain English

standing orders during the last Parliament. He was a member of the Public Bodies Review Committee from 1980 to 1986 and was chairman of the Select Committee on Government Appointments from 1991 to 1992. He was also a member of the House Committee from 1992 to 2002, and it was in that capacity that I first met Bruce in his term as chairman of the IT subcommittee; he was very passionate about IT. He was chairman of the Library Committee from 1992 to 2002 and a member of the Parliament House Completion Authority from 1996 to 1997.

Bruce Chamberlain was born on 9 August 1939 in Brighton and, as the motion says, died, sadly, on 1 October 2005 in Melbourne. He was married on 6 February 1965 to Paula Swan; he was the father of two sons and two daughters. He was educated at De La Salle College in Malvern and then at Melbourne University. His career spanned a range of areas: he spent his pre-parliamentary time as a partner in a solicitors firm in Hamilton from 1965; he had farming interests in Hamilton and its region; he was on the council of the University of Melbourne. Some of his interests included being a member of Amnesty International, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and a range of clubs — whether it be the Lions Club in Hamilton, the Hamilton Golf Club or the Hamilton Racing Club, he was a man of the Hamilton community. He was also a honorary life member of the Australian Lebanese Zahle Association and was awarded the Member of the Order of Australia on Australia Day 2005 for his services to Parliament and the community.

President, I had the sad privilege with you and other members of this place of attending Bruce's funeral on 7 October in St Mary's Church in Hamilton. I would like to reflect on the funeral because in many ways it is where the family and community summed up the life and character of Bruce Chamberlain. It was interesting when you come into a funeral particularly in a country town to have the priest, Father Patrick Mugavin, talk about Bruce as someone he knew — someone who had been a parishioner in his church and as someone who had been a member of this community. This gives you instantly a sense and a feel that a person has been part of a community, not someone who has been remote or detached from it. That was particularly moving.

Also moving was the poem read by Bruce's grand-daughter, Kate, as a tribute to him. We also had words of remembrance from Mark Brian, a lifetime friend of Bruce, who recounted a lot of his life. The messages that came through were of a man who was passionate about life, a man who cared about his family and a man who was passionate about his town of

Hamilton. You heard a lot of about Hamilton and the things about Hamilton. Whilst he was not a native of the town, most of his adult life was spent in Hamilton from the time he as a young solicitor moved to the Western District. We also heard of his passion for the Parliament — and others will reflect on that here today — and some subthemes of the community where we heard about the law and the Liberal Party and his involvement with it.

We have a picture of a man who enjoyed life and who had contributed to life, and always on these occasions it is delightful to see the picture of the person. I am acutely conscious of Mark Brian's final words about Bruce view of speeches: that he thought people could be longwinded and, as Mark said in his words of remembrance, that if he went on any longer Bruce would start dozing or fidgeting because he had gone on for far too long.

At the risk of offending the memory of Bruce, I will conclude on that note and offer my sincere condolences on behalf of the government to Bruce's family.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — It is with real sadness that I rise to speak about Bruce Chamberlain, but with an enormously fond memory of him. I was one of a large number of members of this chamber who were elected coincidentally with Bruce becoming President of the upper house. He was to me and to many other then new members and members elected subsequently on both this and the other side of the chamber a great mentor, adviser and, dare I say, friend, notwithstanding party affiliations.

Bruce was an uncommon man in that he had an extensive range of interests, and while we who worked with him saw him primarily as a parliamentarian, in fact parliamentary life was but a small aspect of Bruce Chamberlain's whole being. There are very few people I have met in politics who have brought with them such accomplishment and have been so well suited for the role they actually played. Bruce brought enormous dignity to the role of President of the Legislative Council. Indeed he took the role of President so seriously that he used it as a lever to ensure that there was a proper and fulsome democratic process within the chamber. He ensured that, notwithstanding the numbers in this place at any particular time and those who had the ability to push their particular partisan agendas, he acted as an absolutely impartial presiding officer.

Just a personal remembrance for me initially is that at the opening of Parliament in 2002, when my wife, Elizabeth, and two young daughters, Penny and

Annabelle, were with me on an occasion full of pomp and ceremony and quite an extraordinary occasion for a new MP, Bruce made us all feel at home. He came outside, and while we were standing on the front steps overlooking Spring Street someone offered to take a our photograph us. Today that photograph of my wife and two young daughters, one of whom was in a pusher at the time, is on my mother's fridge door. It is her favourite photograph of two of her granddaughters.

But the point is that Bruce was totally at home with those children, as I know he was with people of all ages. He brought young people into the Parliament — his involvement in the YMCA's Youth Parliaments was important — and he encouraged the use of the Parliament as a place for activities other than the debating of government legislation.

To top and tail that personal remembrance before I make some comments about Bruce's career, I have a second photograph taken, coincidentally, in February 2003 on what was, if you like, Bruce's last day as Presiding Officer. It was taken in the same location, but the two blonde-headed girls were somewhat taller at that stage. It is a great remembrance, and it will endear Bruce's memory to the Davis family forever, because Bruce was somebody who went out of his way to make me feel comfortable and to help me develop my professional skills — and I know I can say that in relation to all other members who were here during the time Bruce Chamberlain was Presiding Officer.

It is useful for us to recollect what an incredible background Bruce had as a parliamentarian, but, of course, there is a long lead-up to developing a parliamentary career. Although Bruce served effectively, representing his community in local government and in Parliament as a public figure for about 35 years, he was certainly understood in parliaments around Australia to be a President with an enormous reputation.

When he retired he was the longest-serving Presiding Officer in the Australasian and South Pacific region. He was awarded the Order of Australia Medal on Australia Day this year for his service to the Victorian Parliament, his fostering of the democratic process, his work in improving library and information technology services and for promoting the public interest in Parliament and the community. He was a man of incredible distinction and enormous energy. I think all members of this house would describe him as a parliamentarian rather than a politician.

Bruce Chamberlain was born in Brighton on 9 August 1939. He was educated at De La Salle College in

Malvern, where he was college captain. He graduated from Melbourne University in 1964 with degrees in arts and law. He was apparently interested in football in those years because for two years he was secretary/manager of the University Blues Football Club. He practised law briefly in Melbourne before moving to Hamilton in 1965 with his wife, Paula. He joined the law firm Melville, Orton and Lewis in Hamilton and that legal partnership was a great success. He enjoyed the law but also enjoyed public service. He served on the Hamilton City Council from 1969 until 1973, before entering Parliament.

Bruce had the wonderful facility of enjoying a balance between work — the profession of law — politics and community service and a very active family life, to which he was primarily dedicated. He was very interested in the development of western Victoria. He was a member for Dundas in another place between 1973 and 1976 but unfortunately was redistributed out of a job. He had the opportunity to translate from the Legislative Assembly to the Legislative Council in 1976, having been selected by the Liberal Party to stand for Western Province, a seat he held until 2002 when he formally retired as a member of Parliament, although he continued as President until 2003. It was a very long period of service to the Parliament of Victoria — 29 years in total.

During his time in Parliament Bruce had many roles, as has been alluded to. I will not repeat all of them but I will say that his important portfolio responsibilities included conservation and planning from 1982 to 1985 and Attorney-General from 1985 to 1988. He was Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council between 1986 and 1988. He had portfolio responsibility for local government and major projects from 1988 to 1989, industry, technology and resources from 1989 to 1990, and local government, planning and state growth from 1990 to 1991. We know he was elected President of the upper house in 1992 and continued in that role for just over a decade.

While he was completely impartial in the operation of the Parliament, Bruce had a feisty interest in the democratic process. He was very objective in the contribution he made to debate in the Parliament and, I daresay, in the community. From my examination all of his speeches were well researched, thoughtful and very even handed. He was a fierce advocate for his electorate and was recognised for pushing very vigorously for the extension of the local gas network to south-west Victoria. He was, therefore, instrumental in getting many towns connected to the statewide gas grid.

I think it is fair to say that there would be a dispute about my next comment, which when made about a presiding officer inevitably brings to mind some particular case studies. However, I think Bruce's rulings were always impartial, even though the recipients of them may disagree. He was impartial, and I note that the current President still relies on many of those rulings for guidance, so I daresay it can be argued that they were indeed impartial.

Bruce was reformist. He was very keen to ensure that there were changes to the way the Parliament operated to secure its place as a forum for open debate. He saw the procedural arrangements as critical to preserving the opportunity for members, and therefore he worked carefully to see that any changes to the rules of the standing orders put into place a proper basis for maintaining that bipartisanship in regard to debate.

He worked with the Speakers in the Legislative Assembly to modernise the administration of the Parliament by introducing new technologies. I have to say that without Bruce Chamberlain we would still be Luddites so far as information technology is concerned in the Parliament, because it was Bruce who almost singly drove the agenda to ensure that there was a proper rollout of contemporary information technology for the whole of the Parliament — not just members, but of course staff. It was his initiative particularly that ensured that we today are probably at the leading edge of parliaments so far is that is concerned.

He was very keen to make Parliament more accessible to the public, and that is evident most notably in his initiative of proposing that the Legislative Council conduct regional sittings, which it did in 2001 and 2002 in Ballarat and Benalla respectively. Other initiatives include support for the Centenary of Federation sittings by the federal Parliament in Parliament House, Melbourne — in May 2001 senators accorded him the great honour of a chair on the floor of the chamber — and his unswerving advocacy of the completion of Parliament House, which was something that unfortunately did not come to fruition, but it was important that some changes were made in any event.

He was a great friend of the YMCA Youth Parliaments and personally spoke to thousand of visitors to the Legislative Council on parliamentary open days. He was an acting deputy chair for the Victorian branch of the Australasian Study of Parliament Group. It is important to note that Bruce's interest in parliamentary democracy did not stop in Victoria. He was very keen to explore democratic reform on the international stage as joint president of the Victorian branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, he both

hosted and attended numerous conferences of the Australasian and South Pacific nations, where his warmth and wisdom won him many friends, and he was a strong and very public advocate of the need for the independence of and later economic support for East Timor.

In 1999 and again in 2001 he was invited by the Washington-based National Democratic Institute for International Affairs to conduct workshops in Bangladesh on democratic procedures for members of all political parties. In 2000 he hosted reciprocal workshops in Melbourne. He undertook a special Brookings Institution study program in Washington in 2000 to better understand the operations of the United States Congress. He visited Lebanon to explore family ties and tried to fathom that region's complex political situation. He led official delegations to China and Japan. I find this quite remarkable: Bruce studied Japanese in the 1990s, and of course he was able to put that to good use. Bruce had the opportunity to visit the United States of America Democratic Party conventions at one period in the 1990s.

Apart from being an inveterate democrat in the fullest sense of the word — meaning that he was an advocate for the better process of public debate on public policy and proper legislative process — Bruce was also absolutely committed to a whole range of activities outside Parliament. He had great plans to pursue a number of activities when he retired. While, as we heard this morning, he was out inspecting pastures whenever he had the opportunity, beyond golf he was committed to photography and his interest in film, particularly — I find this very interesting — the latter developments in technology that give the capacity to digitally record interviews with people for posterity.

He undertook a series of interviews with personalities, including former premiers and participants in the Second World War, to record their views and produce oral histories that would be available for others to research in years to come. He was interested in Chinese ceramics. He was particularly interested in current movies, and I often bumped into him in the city on Monday nights before Parliament sat. He was a great theatregoer.

It is useful for us to note that Bruce's real interest was community affairs. While he served the Parliament diligently, he was a great advocate for getting services into his community. He was the chairman of the Glenelg Regional Library Service for 18 years, which is an extraordinary length of time. He was a member of the Portland Development Committee and chairman of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

community consultative committee in Hamilton. He continued in many of those roles while he was a member of Parliament. I could allude to his membership of various golf and racing clubs. While those memberships did not have a great deal to do with his parliamentary life, they certainly enabled him to spread his network of influence, if you like, and make contacts. By being actively involved in those two recreations he made a wide field of contacts for his parliamentary work.

Unfortunately Bruce passed away at the early age of only 66. His passing is regarded with great regret. I know that his wife, Paula, his sons, Matthew and Peter, his daughters, Jenny and Louise, and his two grandchildren, Tim and Kate, will miss him sorely. However, while we miss those who leave us, and particularly those who leave us prematurely, Bruce Chamberlain left such an impact on so many of us and our society that he will never be forgotten. It is with great regret that on behalf of the Liberal Party I pass on my condolences to Bruce Chamberlain's family. He was an outstandingly decent man, and I will have a fondness for him for as long as I have the ability to remember him.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Gippsland) — Today I join with the Leader of the Government and the Leader of the Opposition in expressing the sincere condolences of The Nationals on the passing of our former President and friend, Bruce Chamberlain. As has been articulated both this afternoon and in the media since his death, Bruce made an outstanding contribution to public life. While I do not wish to relate that contribution in full today, I want to say two things. Firstly, I concur on the significance of the contribution he made in so many areas, and secondly, I marvel at the diversity of interests he had. Whether it be democracy, culture, technology, the arts, sports, history, church or the family, Bruce Chamberlain seemed to find the time to extend his interests in each. We are all the beneficial recipients of the legacy of his interest in those areas.

In the area of democracy, Bruce Chamberlain was an outstanding President of the Legislative Council. While I do not think I can say categorically that nobody ever disputed his rulings, we all admired the competence and impartiality with which he undertook his job.

In terms of culture, we know that Bruce had a great interest in travel and learning about other cultures and languages. I can recall going into his office from time to time and watching him in action when he was learning Japanese and/or brushing up on it. It was something that I admired. The issue of technology has already been mentioned. Bruce Chamberlain was certainly the

driver of IT change right throughout Parliament. If it were not for Bruce, we would be way behind where we are today in terms of the use of IT. It is well known that Bruce had a strong interest in the arts area. I did not know that he had become a film-maker in the few years after his retirement from Parliament.

In the area of sports, his love of racing and golf were particularly well documented. The last time I played at Hamilton golf course I noticed at a dogleg to the left of the third hole there was the proud name of the Honourable Bruce Chamberlain emblazoned as sponsor of that particular hole. It was a challenging hole, but then again that was the wont of Bruce Chamberlain: to set us challenges in life.

In terms of history, it has certainly been mentioned that his film-making recorded accounts of historical events that will be much sought after in the future by people who want to learn about our history. In terms of church and family, his love of his family and in turn their love for Bruce was amply demonstrated at the fine service held in Hamilton just a week or so ago. It was certainly an honour to be part of that celebration of Bruce's life.

I had the opportunity to work with Bruce Chamberlain as his Deputy President in the four years from 1996 and 1999. It was a unique experience for me to work alongside a person with such ability. I must say that I really appreciate all that I learnt from Bruce during that period. I also appreciate that he was certainly prepared to confide in me and value some of my input. Together we did a pretty good job for those four years. I was pleased to be his right-hand man for that time.

There was a lot to admire about Bruce Chamberlain. There are things that all of us who were fortunate enough to work with him will keep as memories. One of those memories is his competence with the English language. He often sent us scurrying to the *Macquarie Dictionary* that sits at the end of the table. I can clearly remember one such example when he admonished a minister of the day for her peregrinations around the chamber. 'Peregrinations' is a word that sent most of us flying to the dictionary.

Another vivid memory is of Bruce's ability to make a speech and how well he did that. In my first term in Parliament Bruce was a backbencher. That was the period between his time as Leader of the Opposition and his time as President of this chamber. He spoke at this time on a whole range of matters with great articulation. He was very clever in his speech making. I can clearly remember that in one of his budget responses he wove a parable of Little Johnny and spoke about how each of the decisions of the then government

were going to impact on the daily life of Little Johnny. The way he put that speech together was most entertaining. I also recall many of the speeches Bruce made at the annual President's dinner. They were very entertaining and often gave an insight into the interest Bruce had in the history of this place. There is much else one could say about Bruce. I would expect he would wish us — as I am sure all good presidents would want — to be more focused in our speeches in preference to our being expansive.

Bruce Chamberlain was a thoroughly decent bloke. He was a most competent person in a diverse range of areas. He was greatly respected by all who knew him. The mass to celebrate his entrance into eternal life, which was held in Hamilton on 7 October, was moving. It was a great tribute to Bruce that so many present and past MPs attended that funeral. I was particularly impressed by the number of staff of the Parliament who also made the effort to go to Hamilton and join in that celebration of Bruce's life. It was great to see people from this Parliament journey to Hamilton to join with Bruce's family at that service. He will be missed by us all.

On behalf of my colleagues in The Nationals, we express our most sincere condolences to his wife, Paula, to his children Jenny, Matthew, Peter and Louise, and their families, and to Bruce and Paula's extended families and close friends.

Hon. ANDREA COOTE (Monash) — It is with great sadness that I speak to this condolence motion for Bruce Chamberlain. It is far too soon. As many have said before me, none of us wants to be making this sort of speech. However, the Leader of the Government, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of The Nationals have spoken about Bruce's dignity in this chamber, of his professionalism in his job, of his prowess with language and of his international reputation, and they have given details of Bruce's former life in his community and his professional life in the Parliament.

At his funeral in Hamilton his lifelong friend and legal partner gave a wonderful history of Bruce's involvement with his local community. The funeral in Hamilton was particularly poignant, because although it was very much a family funeral there was also a degree of dignity and statesmanship about it. I think the most poignant part of the family service in Hamilton was the wonderful poem his little granddaughter, Kate, read to her Pa. I think he would have been extremely proud of her, and I believe we may have a budding politician in our midst. He has given her very good training, I think. She read a poem in which she spoke about the phone

calls she used to have with him and how they used to spend time SMS-ing each other. I do not think many grandfathers would spend time SMS-ing their granddaughters.

In my first encounters with Bruce I was absolutely terrified of him. He would sit in the President's chair in his wig and gown. I sat on the back bench and he would scowl at me. I would get into huge trouble for chattering — most unlike me! — and he would be always chastising me. I was seriously petrified of him. However, I came to know that the wig and the gown and the scowl hid a very loving and encouraging heart. He went on to give me an enormous amount of professional advice and support, for which I am very grateful.

He gave a dignity to this chamber. He brought a professionalism to this place. He had respect for the parliamentary process. He showed me the importance of thorough research for a contribution, and he expected me to behave properly and deliver a well-presented contribution whenever I got to my feet. He gave me very good training, and I am particularly grateful.

He had integrity and impartiality, and he will be well regarded throughout the world for just those sorts of characteristics. As has been said already, his funeral was attended by not only members of his family and his local community but also by a number of people from our Parliament House who made the effort to go to Hamilton to pay their respects to Bruce.

I would like to put on the record today some of the comments I have heard from people who are not able to get up and speak in this chamber — the staff, the people who were involved with and were touched by Bruce's life who are not able to stand here and put it on the record. Many people have come to me and said what a contribution Bruce made to their lives, and I think that portrays someone very special, someone who could walk the international stage, speak several languages and operate in any jurisdiction and yet be seriously loved and cared about by the people who make this place operate.

I have had various people give me notes, and I would like to read some snippets from some of them because I think they can encapsulate exactly what Bruce meant to people in this building. I have had snippets from Wayne Tunnecliffe, Geoff Barnett, Yolande Henderson and Gail Dunston. One of the notes says:

The way he carried out his job meant that staff in the Parliament had an increased respect for the position. Even after his retirement he continued to keep in contact with staff.

He was always a positive figure who continued to praise them for their work.

His personality both during and after his time in Parliament was always appreciated.

Another comment says:

Again he was a thoroughly decent caring and compassionate man. He was an outstanding President and took his role very seriously. He was a great advocate as an ambassador for the Parliament. He had a genuine interest in the Parliament. He really wanted to make the Parliament a better place.

In the Legislative Council he always supported us in whatever we were trying to achieve. It was a great pleasure to work closely with him over a long period.

This person had the pleasure of travelling overseas with Bruce a couple of times and said he was a very agreeable travelling companion. Another person said about Bruce's relationship with the staff and the people that worked with him:

He was a generous and fair boss to his staff here at Parliament House and at his electorate office.

Indication of this is the longevity of the service of those staff.

Most of all he liked to make sure that the Parliament of Victoria was perceived in the correct light, and he worked hard for this to happen.

A true statesman, if ever there was one!

At another time one of his staff was being married in this place. After all the formalities and when everybody had done all the right things, Bruce insisted on walking the married couple out to their car and carrying their bags.

But it was interesting today to hear Bruce Davidson give the eulogy at the memorial service at St Mary's in East St Kilda. He spoke of Bruce's IT involvement and told us that he had been a great chronicler, and because he had such a good sense of history he had done a lot of video interviews with various former premiers. Bruce Davidson went on in the eulogy today to say that Bruce Chamberlain had made Victorian MPs the most IT savvy in Australia.

I heard another contribution from someone who said that in fact when Bruce went to have a look at the Bluetooth technology — which enables you to start your dinner cooking while you are on your way home by ringing up on your mobile phone — he was astonished. Apparently at the end of the demonstration he turned to Gail Dunston, the former librarian, and said 'Gee whiz! I want you as librarian to see how we can in a practical way apply this technology to MPs' information needs'. I think we need Bruce back now to help us with Lotus Notes, because it is still not working.

So far as being savvy MPs is concerned, I am not so certain about that, but we will all miss Bruce.

We could not possibly speak about Bruce without acknowledging Paula. Together they were a wonderful team. Paula was the ultimate support and always knew just the right protocol and perfect manner, regardless of the occasion or the personality. They were both just as appropriate with the drivers and parliamentary staff as they were with the Governor and foreign dignitaries. They were a true political team, and I think the people of Victoria were very lucky to have had both of them. They were truly wonderful ambassadors for our Parliament, our state and our country. I feel very fortunate to have known such a fine Victorian, and I offer my condolences to his family.

Hon. M. R. THOMSON (Minister for Consumer Affairs) — I rise to speak on this condolence motion saddened by the fact that Bruce Chamberlain's retirement was cut short. He was intending to be extremely active in his local community and was certainly looking forward to spending more time with his family and friends. I will not go through the history of Bruce Chamberlain as a member of Parliament — others have done that, and I am sure still other members will reflect on other parts of his history — but I will endeavour to give a personal account.

I was certainly aware of his contribution to the local community. I have had a little bit to do with the Port Fairy area, with my in-laws living down there. Bruce and I would often have conversations about the south-west and those sorts of things. My conversations with Bruce Chamberlain very rarely centred around politics; they often centred around family and common interests, such as wine and food — which was probably not a good interest for a diabetic! I remember the jelly beans that used to sit in the desk. We used to have conversations about diabetes, because my mother was diabetic and used to involve herself with and do voluntary work for the diabetic institute. We had discussions around the latest developments regarding diets and various things that interest diabetics, so we had very interesting discussions.

One of the things that got me occurred when I was in Hamilton last week. As Minister for Consumer Affairs I get to travel around and talk to students at schools. I was at the local Hamilton high school last week talking to the students about consumer affairs issues when Bruce Chamberlain's name cropped up in conversation. The reason it cropped up was that he was part of a mentoring program that was operating out of the Hamilton high school. Not only was he participating as a mentor, but he was also on the steering committee of

that program, ensuring that it ran appropriately, which I think sums up Bruce Chamberlain — that everything had to be done appropriately.

I knew Bruce for only a short period of time. I was elected and became a minister in 1999. The dynamics of this chamber were very different during the last term of this government. On the benches on this side of the chamber sat 14 members of Parliament, and 29 members sat opposite. At the best of times it was very robust, and Bruce Chamberlain had to preside over that. At that time I was the Minister for Small Business and the Minister for Consumer Affairs. Occasionally, as would be my wont, I was interested in having a little bit of fun at question time, just to lower the temperature a little bit. One of my favourite topics was the GST. It was good politics for me, and I used it, as any good minister would, to my benefit. On one occasion we were coming to up to Easter and I came into the house with props. The props I brought in were hot cross buns, one of which would incur the GST and the other would not. Bruce Chamberlain ruined my stunt because he confiscated my hot cross buns.

I was pretty upset about this, because it was going to be very light hearted and something we could all enjoy just prior to the break-up for Easter. I was going to end by wishing everyone a happy Easter and safe travels over the Easter period. I went to have a talk to Bruce in his chamber afterwards and expressed my disappointment that I had lost the opportunity. Bruce, I discovered, had a very sound, dry sense of humour. I discovered this when I got a message from Geoff Barnett saying, 'The President wishes to see you in his office'. I went around to his office thinking, 'What have I done now?', because he could be a little scary, and there was afternoon tea with my hot cross buns. He said that maybe he was a little harsh in confiscating my hot cross buns, but we came to an arrangement that if I wanted to do a stunt I would clear it with him first and then, if it was all okay and it did not disrupt the dignity of the Parliament, he would allow me to do it.

I think for me that sums up Bruce Chamberlain. He was a man of great dignity who respected the Westminster system of Parliament and set great store by it. But having said that, he was a man of this age who saw the need for us to take ourselves a little lightly and not too seriously.

I know he will be sadly missed by his family. I send my condolences to his family and to his local community.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — I would like to add a few words to this condolence motion for the Honourable Bruce Chamberlain. While I

know it is a very sad occasion, particularly for Paula and the family, I must say that my memories of Bruce are invariably good memories and they go back quite a long way.

On reflection, most of the times I had with Bruce over the years were enjoyable, friendly and stimulating. I first got to know him in 1987 when he was Leader of the Opposition and I was working at the secretariat. He had upset the government of the day both by being the leader in this place and also by being the shadow Attorney-General. He was using this place wisely in the interests of all Victorians, but he had upset the government, which felt he was meddling with its legislation. Consequently it decided in 1988 that it would unseat him from Western Province, and it announced to all and sundry that it was going to do a preference deal with The Nationals of the day. That did not surprise some of us, but we in the secretariat were concerned that we might have some difficulty with Western Province. Bruce was not at any stage concerned about it, and he was right.

I subsequently in my travels through Western Province discovered why. It did not matter which town you went to — or how big or how small it was — he always knew the people. I remember being on a two or three-day trip four or five years ago when we went through Western Province in some detail — through Apsley and Edenhope. We stopped at Nhill and played golf, I remember.

Ms Romanes — Hard work!

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — Yes, we were working very hard. We had a dinner as well. But everywhere we went people walked up to him in the street and had a conversation. It was not just a hello conversation. All of them had an issue, all of them had an opinion. I am a person who likes to keep to time, and he was too, but he had difficulty keeping up with the schedule we had set ourselves because he was continually going about his work in dealing with his constituents from moment to moment.

He won Dundas from the Labor Party, and when he won Western Province he defended it against all odds from then on because he was above all a man of his community. There is no doubt that he will be greatly missed in the Western District of Victoria as well as elsewhere.

Many people have said things about him, and I do not want to cover that ground again. There are just a couple of things I want to touch on. The first, of course, is golf. I tried to calculate how many times and where we

played golf together, and even if it was only twice a year, we are over 20.

Mr Smith — A life well spent.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — A life well spent, yes, it was. But we played in a lot of places, and we played together when we played in the pro am before the Australian Women's Masters at Yarra Yarra Golf Club, of which he was a member. After he had his heart attack in 1994 he stopped coming to my golf course because it goes up and down the hills. We used to go to Yarra Yarra and play there, which was good, but as I said, we played at a lot of golf courses. Like Mr Davis with his photographs, I have very nice photographs of me with Mr Chamberlain on various golf courses, including a lovely shot looking out from the National across the bay. It was in those walks around the pasture that we had terrific conversations, and I learnt of the breadth and depth and humanity of the man and his capacity to mount an argument, to think things through and to make suggestions about how democracy in our society could be improved.

I was fortunate when I became the leader here. He had also been the leader, but he was by then the President. He was not slow to chide me over the lowering of the standards of this place that he thought occurred when I replaced Mr Birrell — to which in some senses I think I should plead guilty — but he did help me a huge amount in those days, as I know he helped members from all sides of Parliament in the days when he was President.

I want to pick up briefly on the words of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition about the staff. He was greatly loved by the staff of this place. The loyalty they showed him, which he returned, was I believe one of the reasons that this place and this Parliament operated so well.

He was for 18-odd years involved in his local library as the chair of the committee, and he took the library here very seriously as well. I think one of his lasting legacies will be the strength of the parliamentary library that serves us so well.

He was a terrific bloke and a lovely friend, and I too extend my condolences to Paula and the family.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Minister for Energy Industries) — I also want to associate myself with this condolence motion. It is sad, as other members have said, that Bruce passed away at a relatively early age, because I know he was very keenly looking forward to his retirement, and I know he was keenly looking

forward to making a significant contribution after leaving this place.

I got to know Bruce when I was elected to the upper house in 1988. At that time he had already been an upper house member for 12 years and prior to that an MLA for three years, so he had a considerable amount of experience to pass on to a variety of people when I came into Parliament. He was appointed President of the Legislative Council in 1992 when the ALP lost government. He came into the position as President in the context that he was part of a government that was in power. He then, however, had to deal with the opposition, which was led at that time by David White. I have to say that Bruce might have been a bit relieved when I became leader of the then opposition. He might have been a bit more relieved when you, President, became leader after that.

Of course David White, you, President, and I treated the Chair with the greatest of respect. We enjoyed the interaction across the chamber; it was a bit different at that time. We got to know things like the definition of an ‘apposite interjection’ as opposed to some other type of interjection. I have to say that Bruce was generally able to keep his cool in what were fairly trying circumstances a lot of times. He sat through a number of all-night sittings — in fact the record for sitting was something like 34 hours on one occasion in the upper house.

Hon. Bill Forwood — You spoke for most of it!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I was going to say that he sat through most of my lengthy speeches of 3 or 4 hours duration, which even I had trouble getting through, but he sat through them. There were a lot of flared tempers. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned Bruce’s impartiality and I have to say that every time he ruled in my favour I thought he was impartial. He did rule in the then opposition’s favour quite often as a matter of fact. He understood that this place was one of contest — a contest of ideas — and people were here because they were members of Parliament representing a constituency, and that this was the place where democracy played itself out. He did support a number of things in relation to Parliament: I know he supported the right of reply for the public. He also wrote to the Prime Minister, John Howard, on one occasion pointing out or warning him in relation to rushing in and getting involved in the war in Iraq. He was a person who had interests both inside and outside of the Parliament.

We could not quite get him to take off the wig because, alongside his humanitarianism and other interests, was

also a deep conservatism when it came to adhering to the traditions of this house which he defended during his time here. It is fair to say that I and other members appreciated the fact that we could go and talk to Bruce and get a fair hearing. He gave me a fair hearing: he did not always agree with me and I did not always agree with him, but when we did not agree we agreed not to agree and we moved on.

It is important to note also that Bruce had a Lebanese heritage which he deeply valued and respected; he was also well known and well respected within the Lebanese community. On many occasions that I attended Lebanese functions Bruce was there representing the government or the opposition, depending upon the time. That community greatly appreciated that he was there in that capacity.

He was in many respects a gentleman. I think it is true to say that he was someone of sophistication and passion. I did not always agree with him, but I respected him and I know that he will be much missed by many people. I offer my deepest condolences to his wife, Paula, and to his family.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — I first met Bruce Chamberlain when he came to the high country in the 1980s with a group of Liberals looking at the issues — and the main issue was then, and still is, the fight by the mountain cattlemen to save their leases. Bruce was always a great supporter of that. It was also during the time of *The Man from Snowy River* films, and Bruce was absolutely intrigued to meet some of the cattlemen who rode in the films. When I came into Parliament he would put me on show, proudly saying that I was the Man from Snowy River who rode in the films and so forth. He used to go on and reminisce about his times in the high country and enthuse about the heritage of the mountain cattlemen; he was always a great supporter of the cattlemen.

When I came to this place I was told that Bruce, on behalf of his constituents, raised an issue on the adjournment almost every night. This goes back to what was said earlier — that was how he was so well known and so well loved in his electorate, and how he came to hang on when he was challenged.

I found Bruce a wonderful mentor. The Minister for Finance mentioned that Bruce was part of the Hamilton community, and certainly he was part of the parliamentary community here in Spring Street. He would patiently explain the workings of Parliament to anyone who was interested. He always exuded an air of authority, and I think it was this air of authority and gravitas which made his time in the chair so memorable

for all of us who served here at that time.

Mr Theophanous mentioned the late nights, the early mornings and the all-night sittings, one of which from memory went through to Saturday afternoon and tempers did flare as members became tired, irritable and testy.

Rarely did Bruce allow anything to get under his skin, but when it did, my word, you knew entirely that things had gone too far. Most times the house took it on itself to pull back and work within certain parameters.

This is as good a time as any to make a bit of a confession about the jelly beans. Bruce approached me at one stage and asked whether I would like to be a temporary Chair. I took on the role, and I enjoyed it a lot. As we know, Bruce had a bit of trouble with his sugar levels, and in the President's drawer he had some jelly beans squirreled away he thought no-one knew about. Let me tell you, the black ones were the best! Some of the other temporary Chairs were just as bad — we used to nick these jelly beans.

Mr Davis mentioned how visionary Bruce was when it came to information technology. He saw the unlimited possibilities of that medium and the benefits the computer age would bring to the Parliament. He quickly mastered his own computer and encouraged Parliament to embrace the new technology and promote a different way of doing business.

It has been said many times in the last little while that Bruce was a true parliamentarian. He fostered and enhanced the traditions of this place and earned enormous respect from the members and the staff. His rulings were fair and consistent, and they will be referred to for many years to come. It is possible that Bruce will have been the last President to wear the wig. Times are changing. I think that fact is a fitting symbol of Bruce's enormous contribution to the Parliament of Victoria. My sympathy goes to Paula and her family at this very sad time.

Mr GAVIN JENNINGS (Minister for Aged Care) — I wish to associate myself with the condolence motion before the Chair. That is the first and last time I will use that quaint phrase to introduce a contribution on such a motion, and I do it in deference to Bruce Chamberlain. It is a phrase that Bruce used on every occasion that he associated himself with such a motion.

We have heard in the various contributions this afternoon that Bruce was a very intriguing, interesting and capable man, and I would like to reflect on some of the things that I found most intriguing about him. Whilst many people have referred to the fact that Bruce

wore the wig — indeed, Mr Stoney finished his contribution by referring to it — in many other instances he was a modern man. We have heard testimony to his commitment to the introduction of IT in the Victorian Parliament. We have heard about his commitment to reforming the standing orders. He was absolutely determined as the key performance indicator of his last term as President that he would reform the standing orders. Little did he or any of us who slavishly worked through those standing orders during that last term realise that the current government — Labor then had 14 members out of 44 — would take the opportunity after the election, when its numbers were somewhat enhanced at 25 members out of 44, to replace the standing orders. Nonetheless Bruce was very determined to achieve that outcome.

Bruce was also determined to be associated with a number of other progressive reforms, and members have referred to the fact that he was a prime mover in the introduction of a right of reply for members of the public. When he discussed this issue he commented that Parliament had all too often been used as cowards' castle. He also said that the reform that introduced the right of reply was the way to ensure that the public had a better sense of balance. In the spirit of innovation, I congratulate the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on her commitment to innovation today in giving some of the unsung heroes of the Victorian Parliament the opportunity to have their words recorded — not necessarily attributed directly but nonetheless recorded — because one of the hallmarks of Bruce's contribution to the Parliament was that he established working relationships with many people. He was always extremely generous to me — always. He assisted me when I first took on my roles and responsibilities during our first term in government, when we were in a minority position and found the going very heavy on any number of occasions. We had a lot of work to do to get through parliamentary sittings and operate the house in an effective and efficient fashion.

As we have heard from other speakers, fairly unusually Bruce was concerned with international affairs. While he was a person who in the Australian context may have been seen to be on the conservative side of the equation, Bruce never missed an opportunity to associate himself with democratic principles and processes. As we have heard in contributions today, he appropriated to himself the Democratic Party of the United States of America, something which at times my party is likely to do. In terms of the direct connection with the American form of politics, Bruce clearly and squarely on every occasion made sure that he was with the Democrats. He was also associated with improving

governance arrangements and the capacity of democracies, whether in the South Pacific, East Timor, Bangladesh, or indeed exposure to debates in China. He was unswervingly committed to peace and humanitarian causes as a longstanding member of Amnesty International.

Whilst Bruce was a man of peace, he embarked upon a career that is not always peaceful in practice. He did not blanch from throwing himself into the rigours of parliamentary democracy — the inevitable conflict and rigorous debate around the somewhat intriguing, difficult and at times combative issues we deal with in the realms of political parties. In the spirit of innovation I will read an extract from an article that appeared in the Warrnambool *Standard* on Saturday, 30 June 1984. It refers to an incident where:

Mr Kennett had sought to elevate Mr Chamberlain — ahead of more experienced former ministers — to the leaders' group which plays a major role in policy making.

The member for Western Province in the Legislative Council had been what might be called in other circles a sleeper.

...

... the Hamilton solicitor appears to have cemented his position in the Kennett cabinet. That this should have happened surprised the stocky man who's not much taller than the jockeys who rides the two horses he owns in partnership.

Given that many people have spoken about the eloquence of Bruce Chamberlain, I do not think that sentence is one of Jim Clarke's better ones. However, this shows that Bruce Chamberlain was able to circumvent the somewhat difficult terrain of elevation in the political process.

Indeed an *Age* article of 1987 that appears over a picture of Bruce Chamberlain and is headed 'Is this Victoria's most powerful man?' states:

Is this man the most powerful politician in Victoria? Bruce Chamberlain, Leader of the Opposition in the upper house, won't be drawn on that one. But he won't deny it either.

The article proceeded to demonstrate by Bruce's own admission and examples provided by him that it could not possibly be true. It states:

He said in the current session only three bills — the Grocery Prices Bill, the Local Government Election Bill and the Port of Melbourne Authority (Amendment) Bill — had been rejected.

I do not think that warrants the suggestion of him being the most powerful man in Victoria. However, the substance of the article was the role Mr Chamberlain had played in the debate on the Medical Treatment

Act — the dying with dignity legislation — on which he took a position that put him at loggerheads with the government of the day. As Mr Forwood indicated, that led to public statements being made by the Premier of the day, John Cain, that the government was out to get Bruce Chamberlain and would try to ensure that he was not re-elected. That was a political decision the Labor Party arrived at from time to time as an appropriate mechanism for turning over Liberal and Nationals members in certain seats.

The thing I would like to reflect on, given that there might have been a competitive environment in Western Province, is that one of the tributes that rang most true and was one of the most moving I read following Bruce's passing was from the Honourable Roger Hallam, a former member for Western Province. He reflected on Bruce's humanitarian values and his great commitment to professional standards within the Parliament of Victoria. It was a glowing tribute which has been echoed by many of us in our contributions to this motion today.

As my colleague Mr Theophanous said, Bruce had very longstanding and respectful connections with his ancestry in the Lebanese community and was a keen student of Middle Eastern politics. Given the combination of his commitment to the Middle East and his commitment to peace, it was not surprising that in the days leading up to the Iraq war Bruce wrote a letter to another Little Johnny asking him not to embark on the war but to rely on the processes through the United Nations to maintain peace. That was a principle Bruce exercised on a global scale.

I am very pleased to say that it was also something he committed to in private. I will reflect on that in a second. I am also very pleased to say that it did not prevent in any shape or form his receiving an Order of Australia Medal at the beginning of 2005. It is good to reflect on the fact that people can make a stand on certain values that may run counter to the views of governments of the day and not be precluded from being full participants in community life in Australia.

The micro matter I would like to refer to, for members of the house who want to see it in greater detail, is referred to in the Legislative Council's *Procedural Bulletin* No. 6. It relates to a matter that occurred on 27 March 2002. On that night the government announced for the first time that it was only going to have one minister attend the adjournment debate. That resulted in the opposition indicating that it would not agree to the house adjourning.

That created a bit of a dilemma for all of us who were in the chamber at the time. I took a point of order and made two points. I asked the Chair to clarify, firstly, whether if the motion were opposed and voted down that would mean we were required to sit in perpetuity, and secondly, what the Chair would do if government ministers were disinclined to attend the chamber in that context. Bruce reflected on that for a moment and gave a brief statement. He said he thought if the last minister put his or her nose out the door, he may be inclined to close the house down. He then suggested that the party leaders adjourn.

Hansard and the *Procedural Bulletin* indicate that the party leaders and the President adjourned to the President's room for 37 minutes. At the end of those 37 minutes the President came back and reported to the chamber that there had been very fruitful conversations and there would be further conversations. The house subsequently adjourned. I congratulate Bruce on his commitment to peace in both the macro sense and the micro sense.

I have no doubt that Paula, Jenny, Matthew, Peter, Louise and their family are extremely proud of what Bruce achieved and what he gave to them in the 66 years of his life.

Hon. W. R. BAXTER (North Eastern) — On 19 May 1973 Bruce Chamberlain and I were elected to the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, Bruce for Dundas and I for Murray Valley. I think both of us envisaged that we had long careers ahead of us in the Legislative Assembly. Neither of us counted on the intervention of the electoral commissioners, who abolished Bruce's seat of Dundas and severely cut mine about. Bruce was able to make a seamless transition to this place and therefore maintained continuous service to the Parliament from 1973 to 2002. I had to wait two years before I was able to again take up again my friendship and association with Bruce. It has been a very pleasant, enjoyable and fruitful association for all those years.

I hold Bruce in the utmost respect in all the roles in which I have worked with him in this Parliament. One of the first was perhaps not mentioned by the Leader of the Government in the list of offices held by Bruce in the Parliament, although I may have misheard it. That was when Bruce chaired a select committee; I cannot recall the name of it at this moment. It was in 1979 and it was commonly known around this place as the David White Hanging Committee. It went to the issue of allegations made by the Honourable David White against a certain caravan dealer in Ballarat. We had a very interesting inquiry into that, as I recall, and Bruce had a very difficult job of chairing what was a very

fractious committee. I probably caused him a great deal of angst in the end result by voting with the two Labor members on the report. Nevertheless, I respected the way Bruce chaired that committee and the very difficult task he was given by the government of the day in an attempt to bring Mr White to heel.

There is no doubt, as has been said by many, that Bruce had a great respect for the institution of Parliament. He had it as a backbencher, and he had it as the Leader of the Opposition. I want to put Mr Forwood right on one matter — to an extent the Deputy Leader of the Government has already done so — in terms of the reference to an alleged deal on preferences prior to 1992. There was no deal: it was simply the Labor Party deciding which way it would allocate its preferences. Mr Forwood need not concern himself that it was only the apparatchiks over at 104 Exhibition Street who thought this might bring Mr Chamberlain to grief. I well remember a conversation on the front steps of this place with the then member for Doncaster in another place who said to me. 'You know, Bill, Bruce would have made a marvellous Attorney-General in the incoming Kennett government'. Indeed he would have — there is no doubt about that.

As Mr Forwood said and as history shows, Bruce was re-elected in 1992, but he did not become Attorney-General, he became President of this place. While the state of Victoria might have lost the services of what I am sure would have been an outstanding Attorney-General, we in the Legislative Council gained an outstanding President. There is no doubt about that in all the ways that have been mentioned by the many speakers who made contributions today and pointed to numerous examples of Bruce's ability as a President both within and outside the chamber.

I especially remember visiting delegations that were hosted by Bruce in his capacity as joint president of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. He always hosted those delegations, some of which were much more high powered than others, with extraordinary dignity and always extended warmth, friendship and welcome to those people. It is a great tribute to him and to this Parliament that people throughout the world, from commonwealth countries and from non-commonwealth countries, left here with a very good feeling for democracy in Victoria, and for the Parliament of Victoria and the way it extends hospitality to visitors.

I also worked closely with Bruce when I was chair of the former Parliament House Completion Authority and he was an authority member. While I am very sad that we failed to finish this building, I know that Bruce was

extraordinarily disappointed that we were not able to achieve what we set out to achieve with the Parliament House Completion Authority.

Many members have referred to information technology. I am one of those that Mr Philip Davis called a Luddite, but Bruce Chamberlain certainly was not, and we owe him a great debt for pushing hard to put this Parliament at the leading edge of Australian parliaments in terms of information technology.

After Bruce left the Parliament in 2002 I had the privilege and pleasure of having several discussions with him around the place, often in the north library, and usually I have to say lamenting about how standards in this place have gone downhill during our time here. We would not attribute any blame to ourselves, but perhaps endeavoured to identify other scapegoats. Bruce's early and very untimely death has given an extraordinary jolt to all of us because he had given so much but he had so much left to give, and he intended to give it. For us to miss out on that is a great loss to the state of Victoria. I certainly extend my condolences to Paula and to members of the family in their great loss.

Hon. J. M. MADDEN (Minister for Sport and Recreation) — I want to join the condolence motion and make mention of Bruce Chamberlain. When I came into this chamber in 1999 it was all a surprise — as it was for a great many of us, particularly on this side of the chamber but also on the other side of the chamber — and I want to put in context the circumstances under which he presided, because we were a minority and there was a significant difference in numbers, as already stated by the Minister for Aged Care. We had three frontbenchers on this side of the chamber who had never been ministers before. The three of us were completely new to the chamber, so one can appreciate the dynamic of three new frontbenchers in the equation. The vast majority of our members were women, so that made the dynamics slightly different. On the opposition benches there were considerable numbers in opposition, but there were a number of members who had previously been ministers, such as Mark Birrell and Roger Hallam.

In the first few months of government there are a lot of bitter and twisted personalities, and I say that with great respect in the nicest possible way. Given the previous circumstances under which Bruce had presided, the dynamic from 1999 onwards was considerably different, which made for quite a challenging chamber to preside over, but Bruce did it with great grace, dignity and efficiency. It was not necessarily easy for either side to deal with some of his decisions, but they

were made with great dignity and it certainly made for an effective operation of the Legislative Council.

My being wet behind the ears in the early weeks did not make his life any easier. As you would know, President, I was learning on my feet — and some on the opposite side of the chamber may say that I still am. I think I posed a few challenges for him on some occasions, and that extended through that term of government. I remember in the last week I was being somewhat challenged by the opposition and, being a bit nervous, on three separate occasions in the one answer I referred to Bruce Chamberlain as the Acting President.

On the first occasion I think he suggested that he was not acting, that he was the President. On the second occasion I mentioned it again, not appreciating that I had already done so, and I could see that he was getting a little uncomfortable under his wig, which was not normally the circumstance because he was usually calm, cool and controlled under such circumstances. But the third time I mentioned it he stood up. I think it was the first time he threatened to take me to task, being a minister who was so wet behind the ears. I appreciate that for the entire time he presided he certainly understood the very steep learning curve that ministers, particularly me, underwent in the first years of government.

As has been reflected on today, he certainly was a man not only of his community but of his parish. As we have heard from many members of the chamber, regardless of his position in this chamber he was always going to be a great contributor to his community and his parish, and that is reflected in a number of ways. I was reminded of it some months ago in my role as Minister for Commonwealth Games at a community event where a number of councils were adopting a second team. In my electorate the City of Brimbank has elected to adopt Nigeria as its second team, and I met a man who is relatively experienced when it comes to representing the Nigerian community.

Having arrived from Nigeria 30 years ago, this man is now a prominent member of the Nigerian community here. I asked him some questions about when he arrived and how long he had been settled in Victoria. He said that he arrived 30 years after meeting and marrying his wife in London and settled in Hamilton. As one would appreciate, this gentleman from Nigeria looked Nigerian in every sense of the word. I asked him, 'How did you find Hamilton 30 years ago?'. This was probably during the 1970s, and a relationship that in London was not dramatic was a bit more so when settling in Hamilton, particularly on his wife's farm,

which was owned by the family. It was probably relatively confronting for the Hamilton community.

I said to the gentleman, ‘How did you find Hamilton when you settled 30 years ago?’, he looked at me and said, ‘It was very hard. It was very difficult, but I had a good sense of humour, and I met Mr Chamberlain, and Mr Chamberlain helped me greatly’. I thought that reflected very much on many of the themes we have heard today about Bruce. While he was a man of conservative politics and he reflected that in the traditions of this chamber, he was also a great humanitarian and an internationalist. That one story reflects on how he brought that to his own community and parish.

I would like to put on the record my thanks to him for his acceptance of me and his appreciation of my being wet behind the ears in the same way he no doubt welcomed the gentleman I just spoke about into his community and helped him accordingly.

Hon. C. A. STRONG (Higinbotham) — I also rise to support this condolence motion for the Honourable Bruce Chamberlain, AM. Like many of us on the Liberal side I had known Bruce for many years, but it was in the period when I came here that I really understood the depth, quality and character of the man. In this place we see many people come and go — many shades of life, many egos and a broad range of personalities — but I would characterise Bruce Chamberlain as a fine man in all the ways that stands for. He was in every way a fine man. As other members have said, he certainly was enormously helpful to me as a new boy in 1992 not only in terms of how this chamber works but also at a personal level. He had a wonderful ability to communicate with people. I live in Brighton, and we had many conversations about his growing up in Brighton, St Finbar’s Church and his doing his paper round. He had a wonderful ability to connect with people and make them feel at ease.

Above all Bruce will go down in history as perhaps one of the finest presidents this chamber has ever seen. Without doubt he was absolutely outstanding in that chair. He was outstanding in his understanding and support for the heritage and traditions of Parliament. He understood, and you got this in so many of his rulings, that government is accountable to Parliament. Members of the government, whether Liberal or Labor, were always called to account by Bruce to be answerable to Parliament, not to their party or their government. He did much to defend and encourage those traditions. Other members have touched on the wonderful work he did over many years as Chairman of the Library Committee. He nurtured and husbanded that committee

and the library. He had a keen understanding that the wisdom of the world resides in knowledge and books. He wanted to see the library of this place retain that wisdom.

Another bit of tradition that certainly I and others sadly miss is the President’s dinners. This tradition went back for many years and it allowed us to meet with the Governor and spend time with him on a personal basis. It gave members of this chamber the unique experience of being able to communicate directly with the Governor of the state. Bruce and his President’s dinners set a standard that was absolutely exceptional. I mourn their passing.

Bruce had a wonderful intellect. I always felt lost in admiration at how quick he was. I can remember him sitting in the President’s chair with eyes downcast not even seeming to listen to some boring debate and somebody would take a point of order. Bruce would instantly be able to repeat the last words that were said by the speaker on which the point of order was being taken. His recall was fantastic. His judgment was wonderful. His intellect was incisive. He was knowledgeable about points of order and procedures, and he was, as other members have said, absolutely fair. His rulings were inevitably correct. I must say that I and many of us in this chamber would find it a very hard job to live up to his example as President.

He was an outstanding individual. He was passionate about many things, and particularly this place. It is a tragedy that he has been lost to us. We all know we will one day be called by our maker, but it is a tragedy that for Bruce, who had devoted so many years of life to supporting his constituents in this place, which is a life that takes a lot of time away from our families, when he retired and could spend time with his family, suddenly his time was cut tragically short. That is such an absolute shame for Paula and the family. I wish to conclude by saying to Paula and the family that they certainly have great sympathy from me and my wife. The times we spent with them and Bruce were extremely enjoyable, and I feel most sad that they were not able to spend more time with Bruce after he retired.

Mr SMITH (Chelsea) — I am really pleased to make a small contribution to this condolence motion on a gentleman of whom I thought very highly, not just because he was a great lover of the game of golf but because I found him to be a very decent individual here in the Parliament. I recall when I first arrived here he seemed to go out of his way to make me welcome in this place, as I am sure he did with a few of my colleagues and people on the other side who were new at the time.

He conducted himself in a professional manner in the way he ran this chamber and dealt with his staff. We all appreciated that. I always felt that he genuinely believed he acted in an even-handed way in this chamber. Some of my colleagues do not necessarily conform to that view, but in the main he tried very hard to be as even-handed as he possibly could given the fact he was a genuine conservative man. I have already heard of a couple of issues he held that you would argue were not exactly generally held by conservatives, but in essence he was a genuinely conservative man.

I think that was reflected in the only shortcoming that I was able to think of in terms of my assessment of Bruce. It was regarding his views about women in this chamber or the fact they were actually in the chamber. I do not mean this as a hostile criticism. It is just an observation. I think Bruce was a product of his time. He really struggled with the idea that women had a genuine role to play within the chamber. On the rare occasion when things would become a little heated within the chamber, that almost came out to the fore. This was just one area that I could genuinely say I felt was a shortcoming — for want of a better term — of Bruce's. I am sure those opposite do not agree with me about that. But as I have said, it is not an actual criticism. It is just an observation. I reiterate that I think Bruce was a product of his time.

I do not intend to wax lyrical about Bruce. There were a lot of good and genuine things which have been said about him by everyone who has already contributed. I have to say that this condolence motion is a rare occasion. Everyone who has made a contribution has spoken genuinely and from the heart. I have to say that I am also disturbed to hear that those opposite were aware of the jelly beans. I am really disturbed about that because, firstly, they are not there any longer, and secondly, I thought I was the only one who pinched them. Had I known that they were aware of that fact, I may have been a little more heavy handed!

My small contribution has been in recognition of a man who, I think, performed admirably in the Parliament and served not only his constituents but all Victorians in an exemplary way. To his family I send my condolences. I will miss him.

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON (Koonung) — It is good to have a right of reply to Mr Smith. It is rather unusual to rebut somebody in a condolence motion, but I reject out of hand the comments about Bruce Chamberlain's acceptance of women in this place. Bruce Chamberlain accepted many diverse views, he accepted people from many different backgrounds and he accepted all people who had a contribution to make. On this occasion it is

rather odd that Mr Smith has made that observation, because I do not believe it would reflect the position of the man. That said — and I think it is important to have that on the record — I certainly join with Mr Smith and others on this motion to express my sorrow at the passing of Bruce Chamberlain, which has occurred all too soon.

This was a man of incredible intellect — an outstanding intellect, as a number of members have said. It is interesting that the words I had written down have been picked up by many other members in their contributions. Those words are 'decent', 'his intellect', 'his involvement with others', 'his care of the community' and 'his support of people within it'. What I want to say about Bruce Chamberlain refers to my opening remarks to some extent. He was much like me in the sense that my attraction to politics has always been about ideas.

I am not so fussed about the man-to-man stuff of politics; I am more interested in the contest of ideas. I think that is what Bruce Chamberlain was all about too. I think he was a person who really did look for solutions to issues. I think he shared the vision that we all bring to this place. I guess some of us get lost along the way, but we all bring to this place a vision of a better Victoria, a better Australia and a better world. I think Bruce Chamberlain probably did more than most of us who come to this place to try to achieve that vision. He was a man who certainly built bridges between this Parliament and parliaments around the world, and between the people of Victoria and peoples around the world.

Bruce Chamberlain was one of the foremost ambassadors of the state of Victoria, both as host to so many people who came to this place and in his capacity as President of this house, including extensive overseas travel in that office. He generated a great deal of goodwill and achieved an improved understanding of the issues confronting our society and our democracy and the values underpinning them. In the troubled times we live in today, particularly with the threat of terrorism, the world could do a lot better if it had a lot more Bruce Chamberlains — people who are prepared to listen to others, people who are tolerant, people who have his intellect and people who are prepared to show understanding, to explore opportunities and, as I said, to contest ideas vigorously rather than to tackle other people.

This was a man of extraordinary integrity and outstanding dignity. He was respected by all in this place. But more than being respected, this man was admired. That is a rare tribute from parliamentarians.

We work in a vigorous forum and tend to develop adversaries in our political careers, yet this man has gone with kind words of respect and admiration from everybody. I join with my colleagues, my wife and my family in expressing condolences to Paula and her family. Their loss is much greater than ours, but it is a loss which, I suggest, they share with all Victorians.

Hon. B. W. BISHOP (North Western) — I rise to join the condolence debate on the passing of the Honourable Bruce Chamberlain. My sympathies go to Paula and the family. We have heard today that Bruce had a long and distinguished career in public life, including almost 30 years in the Parliament and 10 years as President. Most of it has been said today. Bruce was a good President. He was tough and he was fair. He was very strong and confident. It was not very often that Bruce had to look around for advice on any ruling he gave. He gave them so well that most of us accepted them. Some of us might have felt a bit harshly treated at times, but he was a very strong President. I think he will be longer remembered in this place than many others.

One thing I remember about Bruce was the time we went through the standing orders for the first time. He almost made it an absolute must that they would be finished before he ceased his presidency. In fact I think he worked the clerks very hard getting those standing orders into what we know now as modern language. It was a great time. We would battle through a lot of issues until we got to one on which we could not reach agreement. Bruce would not bring it to a head. He would say, 'We will just let that lie in the sun for a while, and we will move on', and when we came back to it we invariably fixed it up. He showed great skill in managing that process of dealing with the standing orders.

He was a great supporter of democracy. It was one of his strongest interests. He believed in the Westminster system and wanted to show it to everyone. I suppose that made some of us who worked with him a bit grumpy, because he loved Parliament's open days. He would talk to hundreds of people as they walked through this place because he wanted them to see how this Parliament worked. I also well remember his enthusiasm for taking the Parliament to the Royal Melbourne Show. He would go out there each day and make sure that Parliament was on display. I remember his enthusiasm for parliamentary sittings in regional centres. I am sure that without Bruce it would not have happened. Certainly his enthusiasm carried that through. He also loved the tradition. Probably more than anyone else he loved that wig and gown as part of the theatre of this place. He got a real kick out of the

President's dinner. We all enjoyed it very much, but he must have spent hours planning it, no doubt with the management and staff, who liked and respected him so much.

I think the biggest kick Bruce got was working out the interjection of the year. I can remember in my time working with him that we used to have to decide which interjection would apply bets to the whole process. You could only use the ones that were picked up in *Hansard*, and there were some absolute rippers that were not picked up which I am sure would have won the interjection of the year quite easily. Bruce enjoyed that very much.

I remember being involved with him in meeting the visiting delegations that Mr Baxter mentioned. Bruce always showed those delegations the utmost respect for their cultures and their countries, and I am sure they took the message back when they went home. That leads me on to Bruce's love of travel and his study of the cultures of other countries of the world. I was fortunate enough to go with him and others to Japan, where he took great pride in giving many of his speeches in Japanese, which is a fair sort of achievement when you consider the complexity of the language. Again he loved the ceremony.

Whilst he was over there he also enjoyed one of his hobbies — he was an excellent photographer. On those trips there was always some concern that the camera might have captured an embarrassing moment. This morning at the memorial service I was chatting to the Speaker in the other house, Judy Maddigan, and we were chuckling about that. She said to me, 'You had the wood on Bruce', because I had a wonderful photo of Bruce and the Clerk, Wayne Tunnecliffe, enjoying a well-earned snooze on one of our train trips, which I held in great reserve to ensure there were no embarrassing moments one way or another. It is a very good photo of Wayne Tunnecliffe and Bruce Chamberlain. I must get out the video that he sent around to all of us who were on that trip. It is well done and very professional.

I remember mostly my times with Bruce Chamberlain when I was his Deputy President between 1999 and 2002. He was great to work with. If the going got really tough, as it does every now and then in these places, he would never barge into the chamber and take over; he would let you run it out, and sometimes it was a bit difficult. I had some great battles in that time. Some of the great battles that I had were with Minister Theophanous, and they raged on for quite some time. But it was all part of the game; there was no antagonism in it and it was all part of the testing

process. I used to worry about it a bit. I would go and see Bruce, and he was always able to give me the right advice so that I knew what to do next time around.

It is a sobering thought for me to think that Bruce Chamberlain is now gone, because we are the same age. I think about that a fair bit. It is a great shame, as Mr Strong said, that Bruce has been taken from us so early. I suppose there are lessons in it for all of us. But I guess the bright and the positive side is that Bruce Chamberlain had a full life. It was a life dedicated to public life, the community, the Parliament, and most of all his family. He was often talking about his family — he was so proud of them. Bruce's death is a great loss. He was taken from us far too soon. I send my sympathies, once again, to Paula and the family.

Hon. D. McL. DAVIS (East Yarra) — I too wish to associate myself with this condolence motion for Bruce Chamberlain, whom I respected and who was respected throughout this Parliament and throughout the community. His community involvement and his decency are testimony to a life well lived and to a model for many of us to emulate. I express my sympathy and condolences to Paula and his family.

The untimely nature of Bruce's death is something that I think all of us should reflect upon. I know he was looking forward to his retirement. On many occasions I had discussed those matters with him. I came into this place as a new member in 1996. It is interesting to reflect on that date — compared with Mr Baxter, who came into this Parliament at the same time as Bruce — and look at the longevity of members in this chamber these days. Much of Bruce's knowledge and experience came from that period of time that he spent in this chamber. There were very few situations that Bruce had not seen, whether in his role as President or in political contexts beyond this chamber. Bruce had a great impact on me as a new member. He was welcoming and he was generous. I certainly respected the knowledge that he was prepared to impart to me and others. I think he also taught me and others respect for this chamber and for its traditions and procedures, and the protections that are built into those traditions and procedures for the community — and I will return to those in a moment.

As has been said, he had a very sharp and incisive mind. I think that was one of the things that struck me most. His decency has been spoken about at great length. There was never a bad word about Bruce. Nobody could say that he had not given a fair hearing to anyone, whether it be someone in his constituency or in this place. He was fair and he was tolerant. The points that Mr Atkinson made about Bruce's tolerance are very important. To pick up the point made by the

Minister for Energy Industries, the Honourable Theo Theophanous, I have no doubt that Bruce Chamberlain's Lebanese background and heritage, which I know he respected, were an important part of that tolerance. He was able to see people for what they were, from whatever walk of life or background they came from, and treat them with great reasonableness.

Bruce was a credible person. When he spoke about a matter you knew that what he was saying was accurate, that it had been thought through and that it had been thoroughly researched. I think that is an important point. With that credibility, research and understanding came much of Bruce's authority. Mr Bishop has referred to the authority that Bruce had in the chair, and he also had that authority more broadly in politics generally. Bruce was a generous man, and he was prepared to spend his time to help others. I place on record my thanks to him for that early period when I came into this chamber. He was prepared to teach new people; he was prepared to speak to people and to enlighten them about matters here.

It has also been said that Bruce was a progressive person. He was in some ways a conservative person philosophically, but in terms of his attitude to life and to the adoption of new practices and ideas he was prepared to look at things progressively. The right of reply has been mentioned in this place, and I think that is an important addition to the procedures of this chamber. Equally his advocacy for information technology was testimony to his willingness to adopt new ways and to think through what can be added to the armoury of MPs and their capacity to deliver service to their communities.

Bruce's humanitarian tendencies and genuine embracing of human rights have been spoken about. I know that his advocacy for Amnesty International and many other humanitarian causes was something that people respected widely. Bruce Chamberlain was a statesman. He was prepared to speak in favour of what was right and what he saw as the correct way rather than, on some occasions, the expedient way. I think that is also a valuable lesson for many of us in this chamber and in public life more generally.

But I think Bruce's role as a custodian or a guardian of the traditions of this house is perhaps the greatest role that he was able to play. That respect of the traditions and the protections that are built into those traditions is a very important lesson for us all. We tamper with traditions, we tamper with procedures, and we change practices in this chamber, in my view, at risk. We need to think those changes through very carefully. Bruce, whilst prepared to adopt new ways, was always

cautious to retain what was important and what was the essence of this place. That I think will be seen as his great achievement. The 30 years that he was a member of Parliament will be seen through that mechanism in particular.

Bruce was a great President. He stood up for the chamber and for the rights of members and the rights of the communities that they represented. We should never forget that we are here representing communities, and those communities are in effect the people who have the right to express their views in this place through us. Bruce understood that because he was a community person and because he equally understood the power and the traditions and the capacities of this chamber. I very much regret his passing.

Hon. J. A. VOGELS (Western) — I, too, would like to join this condolence motion for the Honourable Bruce Chamberlain today. There is no need for me to go through the excellent parliamentary record that Bruce had in this place. I would like to concentrate for a couple of minutes on how I met Bruce and just focus on some local issues. I met Bruce probably in the late 1980s. As we have heard, he was on many, many committees throughout western Victoria. I was on quite a few myself, so I got to know Bruce on some of those local committees. It was not actually until the mid-1990s that I went to see Bruce Chamberlain — because I was in trouble, my town was in trouble and my community was in trouble.

It was over the closure of our hospital. Bruce was the local member, and the acute services section of the hospital was going to be closed and it was to become an aged care facility. We as a community needed our hospital very badly. We knew how important it was to our community. I went and saw Bruce Chamberlain and also John McGrath, who was the member for Warrnambool in the Legislative Assembly, and both of those MPs fought very hard for us. They brought the whole Timboon hospital board down to meet Rob Knowles here in the Parliament and we sat down and discussed the issues. At the end of the day, thanks to Bruce Chamberlain and John McGrath, there is now a brand new hospital in Timboon with five doctors there. It is an excellent service. It just goes to show what a local MP who really wants to fight for his community can do. I will never forget that. In fact afterwards Bruce and I became good friends, and he encouraged me to join the Liberal Party, which I did.

We have a couple of other similarities. Bruce was elected to the lower house seat of Dundas and found in his first term that the Victorian Electoral Commission, had had a bit of a look around and abolished his seat. I

won the seat of Warrnambool in 1999 and the VEC did exactly the same thing — it had a bit of a look around and thought, ‘We don’t need John Vogels in the lower house’, and it abolished the seat. When the VEC brought down that report, we got the maps in here. I looked at the maps and to my horror found that there was no seat of Warrnambool. Before I could do too much thinking about that, Geoff Barnett came to see me and said, ‘You’ve been summoned to see Bruce Chamberlain’. I do not think I had ever been in there. Bruce sat me down and said, ‘John, don’t worry too much about it. I have not told a lot of people this, but I intend to retire from Western Province at the next election, and if you decide to run, I will support your candidature’. That gave me a great deal of hope, but I also thought, ‘Here is Bruce Chamberlain, a very articulate man with a law degree’, as we have all heard before, ‘and here is John Vogels who arrived in Australia at the age of 7 and left school at 14 to milk cows’. I thought, ‘It is interesting, isn’t it, that in this country, anything is possible’.

Bruce supported me greatly after I had been preselected for Western Province, and he took me to many towns. As many people have said, we would go to the local police station, the local hospital, the school and onto people’s properties or farms. He knew them all, and he would introduce me. We were driving home one night — I will always remember this — and Bruce said to me, ‘John, you are doing okay. People will notice a difference when you are the member for Western Province, but we also need sluggers in the Parliament, fighters like you’. I thought that was an excellent compliment, and I have always remembered that.

We finished up sharing a racehorse a couple of years ago. It won its first race at Bruce’s home track at Hamilton. I think it was 23 to 1. I was a bit more sure that it would win than Bruce. I put \$100 on it; I think Bruce only put \$10; he was a bit more conservative. I was very happy about all that.

Bruce has been a champion for the Western District for over 30 years. I would like to express my condolences to his wonderful wife, Paula — who whenever I went into her home treated me fantastically, as the whole family did — and to Jenny, Matthew, Peter, Louise, Tim and Kate, and Gary, Simon and Claire, and also to Bruce’s brother, David, whom I met for the first time today, as part of the extended family. I have also lost my brother, so I understand what he is going through as well. It is very difficult. Bruce made a wonderful contribution to Victoria and to this Parliament, but he was especially a local champion for Western Province, and he will be sadly missed.

Ms ROMANES (Melbourne) — I am grateful for the opportunity to speak on the condolence motion for Bruce Chamberlain today. As a result of some of the contributions today, I am reminded that my election to this Parliament was not the first time I met Bruce Chamberlain. I was taken back earlier in memory to about 1993 when, as mayor of Brunswick, I was invited to give the address at a Lebanese citizenship ceremony — a very large event — that was held in Queen’s Hall. Not unexpectedly, as you would all know, Bruce was there. I recall how he took me under his wing at the end of the ceremony and showed me this chamber and other parts of the Parliament and was very welcoming.

President, I am glad I had the chance to get to know Bruce Chamberlain during the period of the 54th Parliament, which was the time we shared in this chamber. I had closer contact with Bruce than often occurs between members across this chamber. There were three main reasons for that. The first was that during the 54th Parliament I was the Government Whip and sat at the opposite end of the chamber from where I am now, close to the President’s chair. The whips have daily interactions with the President, so it was an opportunity to get to know Bruce in that way.

The second reason was that I had the privilege of joining a delegation of the Victorian Parliament led by Bruce Chamberlain in the year 2001. That was a delegation that visited Victoria’s sister province in Japan, the Aichi Prefecture, and it was an amazing experience. We had a whirlwind six days, all very carefully planned by Bruce, who had been to Japan many times before. He was determined that not only would we cover the key political contacts we needed to cover but that we would gain, as members of Parliament from Australia, insights into a unique culture that is very different from our own. I have a strong memory of that trip, of Bruce’s love for Japanese culture, language and food, and of his abiding curiosity and interest in everything around him. I am sure you will all understand when I say that he was fastidious in his preparation of the details of the trip, assisted of course by the Clerk, and he delivered all of his most important speeches in fluent Japanese.

Then he had the remarkable capacity to switch from the role of leader of the troop to be observer and to step aside and take out his video camera and film the rest of us doing our duty or admiring cultural treasures of the cities we visited, and then, at the end of it, he provided us all with the wonderful gift of the whole trip on video. For Bruce the visit to Japan, after quite a gap in time, was critical in rebuilding important relationships between the Parliament of Victoria and Aichi, and we

certainly came to appreciate through that visit how important and essential relationships are to any exchange between the Japanese and outsiders. He achieved that objective of rebuilding those relationships, because there have been return visits each way since then, and Victoria was afforded a prominent position at the 2005 Expo in Japan earlier this year.

The third way in which I got to know Bruce Chamberlain over the past few years was by being a member of the Standing Orders Committee. I was appointed a member of the Standing Orders Committee of the 54th Parliament and as a newcomer was not sure exactly what that would entail, but Bruce had decided that we needed a complete revision of the standing orders. We had some tinkering with the standing orders in the 1950s, but Bruce was determined that we needed to do a major rewrite, the first since 1924, and that we would modernise the language, make the language gender free and provide for more practical and accessible standing orders.

That may seem like an esoteric task, and new members may find it difficult to appreciate how antiquated some of the standing orders we were faced with in 1999 actually were. That Standing Orders Committee under Bruce’s able chairmanship set to work over many months to complete the task and to see it through the house, with your indulgence as leader at the time, President, just before Parliament was dissolved for the 2002 election — just hours and a few days before — so it just made it down the straight to the finishing post. Bruce was elated. He wanted to complete that major task and leave it as an important legacy for the upper house before his retirement.

Understanding a little bit about his love of life and breadth of interests, I am deeply saddened that he did not have longer in retirement to follow on his distinguished career and to spend more time with his wife, Paula, and his family. I am also sorry that Bruce, with his love of history, was not able to complete the other task that he had set himself of documenting the oral history of the political context of the last 30 years in this state as he has spent the last few years interviewing former premiers, MPs, constituents and others to gather their views and record the evolution of Victoria from their perspective.

At the memorial service this morning I met one of my cousins, Jim Clarke, a previous editor of the Warrnambool *Standard*, who was about to hand over to Bruce a significant tape of a conversation he had with Ian Smith which helped change the course of political history in Victoria at one stage. I hope there will be someone who will bring those oral histories together

into a collection that will be placed somewhere like the State Library of Victoria and be available as primary sources for future students of history and politics as Bruce intended them to be. Bruce Chamberlain is a person I will remember with much fondness and respect, and I extend my sincere condolences to Paula and the family.

Hon. DAVID KOCH (Western) — I rise to briefly join the condolence motion today. I certainly believe our couple of hours here this afternoon furthers the celebration of Bruce Chamberlain's life, which we have had the good fortune to do over the last couple of weeks. Bruce made a big mark in the community that he resided in, and I will be devoting most of my speech to Bruce and Paula and their family and the contribution they have made to Hamilton. We have heard clearly about the contribution Bruce has made not only to the Parliament but certainly to the state, as well as internationally.

Nineteen sixty-five was certainly a big year for Hamilton, although it was probably not recognised for some time after. It was the year that Bruce and Paula were married and elected to come to Hamilton. I believe — and I stand to be corrected — the corner of Martin Street and Kennedy Street has been their home for all their time in Hamilton. It is well located. It is on the south-west corner of the botanic gardens in Hamilton and it became a very important place for Bruce in his time up there. Bruce was a very good solicitor. He was seen by his peers as an excellent man coming to Hamilton to assist in the legal profession. He joined Melville, Orton and Lewis, a business which has thrived beyond the period that Bruce was there. His colleague Mark Brian very generously gave the eulogy at Bruce's funeral service. Mark was encouraged to Hamilton after Bruce and Paula had moved up there; I think Mark came up in either 1966 or 1967.

It is also important to say that from the very first day that Bruce and Paula came to the Hamilton community they were contributors — they became heavily involved in their new community, they raised their family there and St Mary's Church became very important in their lives. I can assure the house from the church's point of view that Bruce and Paula became very important in the life of the church in Hamilton. He served a lot of time on the finance committee at St Mary's and he was a major driver in the redevelopment of the church with his colleagues on the finance committee. St Mary's — where many of us journeyed last week — has a prominent position in Hamilton and is a church that has served its parish very well and will continue to do so. There are a lot of memories there of Bruce Chamberlain. He played a big

part in what took place there. As Bruce and Paula's family came forward, they were educated at Monivae College on Ballarat Road. Not only did Bruce participate very actively during the time of their children's education, he has always been one of the patrons for Monivae right up to the time of his passing, making a great contribution. It should also be reflected that Bruce's input was one of the main drivers in bringing the RMIT University campus to Ballarat Road in Hamilton. Bruce has made a marvellous contribution to education.

We heard earlier about his chairmanship of the library over 18 years whilst he was a Hamilton city councillor. Many people may not appreciate that not only was Bruce chairman of the Glenelg Regional Library Service but that this service was made up of seven municipalities and there was always much conflict around the table as to whether the library service would give them a static library or a mobile library and whether they could extend the mobile library services across what is now the greater region being made up of the Southern Grampians and Glenelg shires.

I have to say that after 18 years of Bruce's chairmanship the library service was a standout among rural libraries in Victoria. What was achieved in that period of time was nothing short of marvellous. The library got involved very early in the piece in servicing smaller communities with mobile libraries; information technology has certainly become a big part of the regional library service and I think Bruce and some of his earlier colleagues must share much credit for that.

I did have quite a few words to say this afternoon, but other members have made comment in relation to Bruce's service away from Hamilton. It is important to recognise the time that Bruce spent in his community. It was not uncommon for Bruce and Paula, when he was not in Parliament or on other parliamentary duties, to be in the streets of Hamilton. He loved his films: he was a film buff and he obviously went to many films when they were showing at Hamilton. He made many contributions to our colleges and hospitals. I was interested to hear before that somebody had even learnt of his participation in the new mentoring process in Baimbridge College in Hamilton. I think the Deputy Leader of the Government raised that issue.

Bruce made a big contribution there, as he did in this house, where he took many deputies or acting presidents aside and mentored them. He gave them a good understanding of the responsibilities of their roles and a confidence that in his absence people would be able to manage the house in a fair and proper manner.

Bruce Chamberlain, in so many ways, is certainly well thought of in our district. He was a man who came there — probably initially because he hoped to extend his legal expertise — before getting involved in community activities, and stayed there for some 40 years. I truly believe Bruce Chamberlain is credited with being what I would term a local bloke. Many people would see Bruce on a weekly basis. He would go to our local coffee shop, known to many I am sure, Gilly's Coffee Shop and Grill in Gray Street. Bruce and Paula would sit down and have a cup of coffee, but I can assure you there were very few occasions when they had that on their own. Many people from far and wide, who always go to Gilly's when they are in town, would happen to meet up with Paula and Bruce and share conversations. Bruce always wanted to know what was going on around him and was always only too ready to hand out advice and offer assistance. That was much appreciated across the Western Province, as I am sure it was across Victoria.

Bruce and I had a common interest in the racing industry. Bruce, as many would know, was a keen follower of bloodstock, indeed an owner and part-owner of many successful horses, having had some 50 winners over recent years. Ironically my last conversation with Bruce took place in Gray Street — I should imagine as Paula and Bruce were going to Gilly's; we were only about 20 metres short — and as Paula went on Bruce indicated to me that he hoped tomorrow he and Paula might come down to town for the Turnbull Stakes, and was as per usual on the sniff for a tip for a winner of something like that. Unfortunately I was unable to assist Bruce, because I had the Murtoa Cup the next day and the Goroke Show, and that was the direction I was heading in within my electorate.

My memory of Bruce Chamberlain will be of our very last conversation, sadly within only 24 hours of his passing. Bruce Chamberlain was one of those infectious people who was always about, never intrusive but who always offered advice and assistance wherever he could. As a long-time friend and student of his mentoring, I can openly say that irrespective of all the achievements and political positions gained during his long parliamentary career, after his family, his constituents always had his first attention if and when he was needed.

Bruce Chamberlain, President, was a very good person, a good politician and a good family man. As my colleague John McQuilten has said to me on many occasions, Bruce Chamberlain was an honourable man. That really sums up Bruce. I sincerely pass on my

condolences to Paula, Jenny, Matthew, Peter, Louise and their families.

Ms HADDEN (Ballarat) — I feel very privileged to be able to speak on this condolence motion for the late Bruce Anthony Chamberlain, AM, the President of the Victorian Legislative Council from 1992 until February 2003, who passed away suddenly on Saturday, 1 October 2005, at the age of just 66 years. Bruce was indeed a highly respected and well-liked President, member of the Victorian Parliament and the longest serving Presiding Officer in the Australasian and South Pacific region.

Bruce was born on 9 August 1939 at Brighton, the son of Peter Henry, a railways paymaster, and Eileen Haddad, who was of Lebanese parentage. This began Bruce's long association with the Australian Lebanese Zahle Association of Victoria. Bruce was educated at De La Salle College in Malvern and completed a bachelor of arts and bachelor of laws at Melbourne University. He began an illustrious legal career with Melville, Orton and Lewis, solicitors, of Hamilton, where he became a partner in 1965 and was later a consultant solicitor following his election to Parliament in 1973.

Bruce was elected to the Victorian Parliament in May 1973 as the member for the lower house seat of Dundas, which seat was abolished in February 1976. Bruce then ran for and won the upper house seat of Western Province in June 1976 and remained the member until his retirement from the Parliament in November 2002. During Bruce's long parliamentary career, spanning three decades, he held many positions, both in government and in opposition. A highlight of Bruce's long legal and parliamentary career was being awarded a member of the Order of Australia on Australia Day, 26 January 2005, for service to the Victorian Parliament particularly by fostering the democratic process, to improved library and information technology services, to promoting public interest in the Parliament and to the community.

I had heard of Bruce Chamberlain and his law firm, Melville, Orton and Lewis, over the years through the legal profession, so when I was elected to the Parliament in November 1999 and first met Mr President Bruce Chamberlain, as he then was, we had this sort of bond through our profession and love of the law and justice as well as an understanding of what it meant to be a country solicitor and the many hardships country clients have to suffer.

I soon found Bruce to be a very fair, kind, tolerant and compassionate President of the Legislative Council. He

went to great lengths to impart his knowledge of the Parliament and its processes to new members. He held an induction meeting soon after members elected in 1999 were sworn in. He also held meetings of temporary chairs each parliamentary session and was very generous in providing sumptuous lunches in the President's suite. Those meetings were invaluable, especially to me as a temporary chair, and I always enjoyed attending them to learn more about the running of the chamber, the sessional orders, *Erskine May*, the Senate practice and the President's many rulings. There were also Bruce's annual President's dinners, which were very special and are well remembered.

Bruce was held in such high regard by all members of this place that I cannot recall his having to invoke the standing orders during the 54th Parliament to throw out a member for disorderly conduct. I always found Bruce to be a fair, unbiased, impartial, tolerant and objective President of the Legislative Council. He was a hard worker yet he was also a taskmaster. He insisted on the rules of the house being followed and applied, especially with new members not getting away with reading prepared speeches in second-reading debates on bills. He would instil in members the obligation to speak with knowledge and understanding of their electorates and not from a prepared speech. Bruce was always available and approachable, both as the President and as a mentor for new members. He was very generous with his ongoing advice and guidance over the ensuing years.

Bruce was a strong supporter of the Parliament as a great democratic institution. He was the deputy chair of the Australasian Study of Parliament Group Victorian chapter for a number of years. Bruce was a strong advocate of the Westminster system of parliament and was very proud of the institution of the Parliament, which he showed off in all its pomp and glory to the thousands of official visitors to this Parliament in his 10 years as a presiding officer.

Bruce was very proud to have led the Legislative Council on its historic first visit outside Melbourne to sit in Ballarat on 16 August 2001, and in Benalla in 2002. He proudly appeared on the front page of the *Ballarat Courier* on Saturday, 21 July 2001 showing the Ballarat mayor 'the real thing' of Parliament — namely the hourglass — and the Victorian Parliament medals for purchase by visitors to the first regional sitting. He informed the public through the *Ballarat Courier* what to expect at a formal sitting of the state's upper house. That sitting was a very popular one with many hundreds of schoolchildren and members of the public filing through the Trench Room of the Ballarat town hall to experience the upper house in real action.

Likewise, Bruce was very proud to have led the upper house to Benalla in 2002 for its second historic sitting outside Melbourne. Many hundreds of schoolchildren and members of the general public filed into the Benalla town hall to see the upper house debate bills and witness a fiery question time. Bruce loved showing off the upper house and the Parliament to the people.

Bruce also had a love of history, including Ballarat's history and that of J. B. Humffray and Peter Lalor, who were the first two members representing the Ballarat goldfields region in the first Legislative Council in 1885 — just 11 months after the Eureka uprising on the Ballarat goldfields. Bruce wrote a moving and factual opinion piece for the *Ballarat Courier* which was published on 26 July 2001, just before the historic Ballarat sitting of the Legislative Council. It was entitled 'Eureka and democracy' and in it he spoke about the successful push for recognition of the miners' rights on the Ballarat goldfields as being unprecedented in the Victorian colony and that many even say this was the beginning of democracy in Australia. He concluded his opinion piece by saying that the miners' uprising had made it clear that the voices of ordinary people needed to be heard. This very much reflects Bruce's own view of life and his strong Christian ethic of listening to the ordinary people and being genuinely interested in their daily lives.

Bruce was instrumental in having the memorial garden of reflection installed in the parliamentary gardens for the 2002 Bali bomb victims. This lovely garden has a seat upon which people can sit and reflect and is near the Spring Street entrance for easy access for the general public. In addition, in October 2002 Bruce joined the United States Consul-General, David Hopper, the Legislative Assembly Speaker and the Premier on the steps of Parliament House to sign a condolence book to pay tribute to the victims of the Bali bombings.

Bruce was instrumental in and a strong supporter of the story of the Eureka rebellion being exhibited on the Public Record Office Victoria web site so that the archives of the Eureka Stockade and Eureka on Trial are accessible by the people.

Bruce appeared at many events after his retirement from Parliament, and the *Ballarat Courier* photographer often happened to be where Bruce was. In November 2004 Bruce attended the Eureka 150 celebrations at Ballarat and was photographed for the 'People and places' page in the *Ballarat Courier* of 27 November 2004 expressing his point of view to East Timor's Foreign Minister, Dr Jose Ramos-Horta, and Premier Bracks.

Bruce loved a challenge and was not afraid to speak his mind or to do so publicly in the letters to the editor section of the *Herald Sun* newspaper. For example, on 25 June 2002 Bruce Chamberlain, President, Victorian Legislative Council, wrote as a practising Catholic and a product of Catholic primary and secondary education in Melbourne about the scourge of sexual abuse being appallingly handled by the church and society, and saying that the paramount focus must be on the welfare of the victims.

Bruce was also very supportive of the introduction in 1998 of the public right of reply to allow Victoria's citizens to have a right of reply in both houses of Parliament. Before this change, members of the public who were the subject of defamatory statements made under parliamentary privilege had no recourse. As President, Bruce said these changes represented a first in Victoria's parliamentary history, and that they would follow the practice already in operation in the Australian Senate and restore some balance in the public's favour.

Bruce was a strong advocate and campaigner for the Parthenon marbles being relinquished by the British Museum in London and returned to their rightful home in Athens, Greece. In one of many papers written after an overseas study tour, entitled 'View from the top' and dated February 1999, Bruce stated that he had discussed the issue with a number of British members of Parliament from all sides of politics and noted that there was widespread support among them for the restitution of the Parthenon marbles to Greece.

Bruce wrote a paper entitled 'Travel broadens the mind — and the policies' in May 2002, in which he argued strongly for the continued exposure of parliamentarians and joint parliamentary committees to overseas practices and expertise. He concluded by saying that if Parliament is to be a more effective institution, if parliamentarians are to be more productive and better informed, and if policies and laws in Victoria are to consistently reflect world best practice, a vigorous committee system is vital and the cost of overseas travel by committees is something we cannot afford to do without.

Bruce Chamberlain, AM, will be sadly missed but fondly remembered. I am so very grateful for having known him on both a personal and professional level since 1999. There are many rooms in our Father's house and a place has been prepared for you, Bruce Chamberlain. Rest in peace and may God bless your soul.

I extend my sincerest condolences and sympathy to his wife, Paula, their children, Jenny, Matthew, Peter and Louise, their two grandchildren, Tim and Kate, nephew Luke and the Chamberlain family.

The PRESIDENT — I also wish to join the condolence motion before the house for the late Honourable Bruce Chamberlain, AM, former President of the Legislative Council and member for Western Province.

Prior to his long service in this house Bruce served the Legislative Assembly as the member for Dundas between 1973 and 1976, before that seat was abolished. His service to the Parliament and people of Victoria had stretched to a remarkable 29 years when he retired in 2002 and retired as President on 24 February 2003.

Earlier today the Deputy Leader of the Opposition indicated that when she first came to this chamber Bruce would be here staring at her and making sure she behaved herself — a bit of a scary figure. I first met Bruce on 28 September 1993, which was my very first day in Parliament. I was elected in a by-election so I was dragged into the house by two of my colleagues and I had never set eyes on Bruce before when I saw him sitting up here in the chair. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition thinks she was scared, she should try being a new member elected in a by-election a year after the introduction of extended hours of sitting and a change of government with your numbers being quite small — it was somewhat intimidating. However, Bruce signed me in as a member of Parliament as he, as the President, was entitled to do following a by-election.

Bruce has been credited with being a champion of Parliament, a point that is evident from his close association with bodies whose primary purpose is to ensure the continued success and development of the parliamentary institution. He was an active member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the Australasian Study of Parliament Group. He also served on the Australian region management committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

I took over the role of President in February 2003 and everywhere I go, whether it be with the CPA, to a presiding officers and clerks conference or to some meeting of legislators, all I hear is the name of Bruce Chamberlain. Bruce Chamberlain was well known within those organisations. He was well respected by presiding officers and clerks throughout the commonwealth and internationally. Earlier this year I had the pleasure of representing the Parliament and

leading an all-party delegation to Aichi Prefecture in Japan. While there I met the Chair of Aichi Prefecture, and of course Bruce had been there earlier and the Chair was asking how he was. The Parliament has received condolences from the prefecture expressing the regret of the Japanese community at the sad loss of Bruce Chamberlain.

Bruce served as the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, as a shadow minister in a number of portfolios over a number of years and on numerous committees. As has been indicated, for some unknown reason he was on the Standing Orders Committee for the entirety of his career in the Legislative Council. I do not know how he did it.

While in the role of Leader of the Government in the last Parliament I remember on a couple of occasions referring to rule 30:14. I think Bruce was the only person in the chamber who understood all the standing orders because of the convoluted way in which they were written, which was part of the reason he wanted to change them. He dived for the standing orders to look for rule 30:14 and said, 'Minister, there is no such order'. I said, 'No, it is 30 of them and 14 of us'. Later he called me into his office and said, 'I am not one of those 30, I am the President. I am independent, and I will change it to 29:14 from now on'.

During the course of this condolence motion the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and others have referred to the staff of the Parliament. We had so many inquiries about attending Bruce's funeral in Hamilton that we hired a bus, and many former and current staff members travelled to Hamilton to attend. During the monthly staff meeting last Friday we observed a minute's silence in memory of Bruce Chamberlain. Many staff members had dealt with Bruce in his decade as President, and Bruce had looked after them.

Outside of parliamentary commitments in Melbourne, Bruce was strongly committed to his local district around Hamilton. Not only had he served as the area's member in the Parliament and as a city councillor, he had also worked as a solicitor and later a consultant for farming interests in the Hamilton region. I found out about checking the pastoral lands when I took over the role as President. I asked what it was about and discovered it was a golf day. I knew what was coming when Bruce Davidson, a former Parliamentary Librarian, referred to it at the memorial service early this morning.

We all know of the work Bruce Chamberlain did in the Parliament and in his community. A week after I had become a member of Parliament I was to give my

inaugural speech. At the time I was sitting in the seat where the Honourable Gordon Rich-Phillips is now. I asked myself, 'What have I done? I have been here a week, but I am not allowed to say anything because I have not made my first speech'. I was called over by the President. He said, 'I know you are going to make your first speech tomorrow; however, there is an issue in my electorate. I have arranged a meeting with the Premier and the education minister regarding school closures, and it is not often that you get an opportunity to have such a meeting. I hope you will accept my apology, but I will not be in the chair for your first speech'. That showed Bruce's commitment to his constituents and his electorate. He was a member of the government party and the President, but he was still fighting for his constituents. They had an issue, and he had organised that meeting.

One of the clues that was given to me when I was asked to see him at the time was to go to his right side because he had a slight hearing problem in his left ear. I used that to my advantage as the years progressed and I moved from the backbench to the front bench, because he could not quite hear all of my interjections. I knew two former ministers, the Honourable Mark Birrell and the Honourable Rob Knowles, used to try to pick up my interjections, but they were missed by the President. That showed the impartiality of the Chair, for which I was most grateful.

Bruce's interests outside of his official responsibilities were numerous, as we have heard. They included travel, his love of history, his Catholic faith and his interest in Chinese antiques. After his retirement Bruce continued to develop his keen interest in history through biographical film-making, and at the time of his death he was in the process of completing a series of pieces chronicling all of the living premiers. As an indication of Bruce's talents as a film-maker, he also made biographical films on war veterans that have been used and are still being used by the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Despite his various professional and personal interests, Bruce's deepest commitment was reserved for his family, in particular his wife, Paula, his children, Jenny, Matthew, Peter and Louise, and his grandchildren, Tim and Kate. We heard earlier about the requiem mass that was held at St Mary's Church, Hamilton, the week before last. I have attended a number of funerals in my day, but I have never before seen such courage as was demonstrated by young Kate, Bruce's granddaughter. Kate stood up and read a poem in a packed church in front of former premiers, ministers, members of Parliament and, most importantly, the family, friends and community of Bruce Chamberlain. Paula has given

me permission to read the poem to the house so that members who were not present can appreciate the courage of this young girl. It states:

Dear Pa
 Thank you for the presents
 For the gifts
 And the love
 Thank you for the help
 For the times
 And all above
 I'll miss your cuddles, your kisses, your voice and talking to you over the phone, one on one or on MSN
 I'll miss making more memories of you and me
 I hope you have fun in heaven
 You see
 I know you are there
 Because you have been
 Such a kind man
 Such an important man
 Trying to help people here and there
 Trying to help people everywhere
 Trying to help people in your politics
 Trying to help the world through the law
 Thanks for my mum, Matt, Pete, Lou and you
 I only wish that you could see my children too
 Lots of love, miss you loads,
 Your one and only granddaughter (so far)
 Kate Louise

I do not think there was a dry eye in the church. We have had numerous members of the house refer to the history of Bruce Chamberlain, but you do not get to hear about Bruce as a family man, which the poem depicts. I thank Paula and the family, especially Kate, for allowing me to read the poem into the record.

In conclusion, I offer my sincere condolences to Paula, Jenny, Matthew, Peter, Louise and the rest of the Chamberlain family, including Bruce's brother.

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

Hon. Alan Raymond Wood

Mr LENDERS (Minister for Finance) — I move:

That this house expresses its sincere sorrow at the death, on 3 October 2005, of the Honourable Alan Raymond Wood and places on record its acknowledgment of the valuable services rendered by him to the Parliament and the people of Victoria as a member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Swan Hill from 1973 to 1983 and as Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs from 1979 to 1981, Assistant Minister for State Development, Decentralisation and Tourism from February 1980 to December 1980, Minister of Public Works from 1980 to 1982 and Minister for Property and Services from 1980 to 1982.

Alan Wood, sadly, passed away on Monday, 3 October 2005, aged 78 years. He was born on 18 June 1927. He served in the 2nd Australian Imperial Force, 22nd infantry battalion, in World War II. Upon being discharged from the army he went on to join the family real estate business, H. A. Wood and Company, founded in 1911 by his grandfather. In 1954 he married Joyce Wilkinson. In 1959 he was elected to Swan Hill Borough Council when he was 32 years old. In 1965 he became Swan Hill's first mayor when it was proclaimed a city.

In 1973 Alan Wood stood as Liberal candidate and was elected as the member for Swan Hill in the Legislative Assembly, a position he held for the next 10 years. During this time he also served as Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Minister Assisting the Premier in State Development, Decentralisation and Tourism — the Premier at the time being Sir Rupert Hamer — Minister of Public Works and Minister for Property and Services. Alan Wood resigned from Parliament in 1983 on medical advice.

In the 1970s he established with his wife, Joyce, an exchange program for Robinvale students with the French town of Villers-Bretonneux. He and Joyce led a tour to the town to commemorate both Anzac Day and the twin town ceremony between Robinvale and Villers-Bretonneux. He was passionate about Swan Hill and its people and was a steadfast advocate for issues affecting regional Victorians. He was known as a family man who loved his wife dearly, paying tribute to her support and encouragement throughout his parliamentary career and other public life. After his retirement from politics he continued to be an active member of the community. It is notable that when the Olympic torch passed through Swan Hill on 24 July 2000, Alan Wood was there to light the cauldron despite suffering the effects of a stroke some four years earlier. He will be remembered as a strong advocate of regional issues and a fiercely proud resident of Swan Hill. On behalf of the Victorian government, I offer sincere condolences to the family of Alan Wood: his wife, Joyce, his children Bill, Karen, Marian, Stuart, Robert and Michael, and his grandchildren.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — I wish to mark my respect for a fine contributor to Victoria's public life, Alan Raymond Wood, who was born on 18 June 1927 in Swan Hill and died, aged 78, on 3 October 2005. His parents were Henry Raymond Wood, a real estate agent, and Irene Elizabeth Faulkner. He married Joyce Wilkinson in 1954 and they had six children, Bill, Marian, Karen, Stuart, Robert and Michael. It is fascinating in today's age that they

managed to provide 16 grandchildren. That is probably the greatest contribution to Victoria of all.

Hon. M. R. Thomson — Peter Costello would be happy.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS — Indeed. We should note that Alan was a dedicated advocate for Swan Hill where he was educated at both primary and high schools.

He served in the 2nd Australian Imperial Force, 22nd infantry battalion, in Australia and overseas until 1945, following which he joined the family real estate business established by his grandfather. He became a director and qualified valuer with the firm H. A. Wood and Company Pty Ltd at Swan Hill and its branches, and he was very involved in the community. He was a great community champion. He was a member of the Swan Hill Sewerage Authority from 1959 to 1974 and chairman between 1963 and 1965 and 1970 and 1972. He was a member of the Swan Hill Waterworks Trust from 1959 until 1974 and was chairman from 1967 until 1969.

He was president and life member of the Swan Hill chapter of Jaycees. He was a council member of the Victorian Bush Nursing Association. He was awarded the Kerang Rotary vocational service award in 1980. He had been a justice of the peace since 1964 and was a member and chairman of the Swan Hill Legacy group. He was a Swan Hill borough and city councillor between 1959 and 1974 and became the first mayor of Swan Hill when it was declared a city 40 years ago, holding that office from 1964 until 1965.

Alan Wood's next move in public life was into Parliament, when in 1973 he was elected to represent Swan Hill in the Legislative Assembly. It was a major achievement to be elected to represent Swan Hill, which had always been and has been subsequently a seat held by the National Party — —

An honourable member interjected.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS — I have been corrected. Of course it was then the Country Party. This is a testament to Alan Wood's personality. As a man he was much larger than life. I can recall as a younger man and a young Liberal, just a blink ago, meeting Alan at various Liberal Party functions and state councils during the period when he was a member of Parliament. I do not recall him well, but I recall his very extroverted personality. He was what we would call politely an affable man. Alan Wood was somebody who just got on well with people. He was a real people person, and that was probably a reflection of the

industry in which his family had spent generations. He could relate to the man in the street, and as somebody who was involved in real estate he well understood the issues of regional development.

After having served some time in Parliament he assumed various ministerial offices. He was Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs from May 1979 to February 1981, Assistant Minister for State Development, Decentralisation and Tourism from February to December 1980, Minister of Public Works and Minister for Property and Services from December 1980 to April 1982 and the minister responsible for ports and harbours from December 1980 to April 1982. He held many other committee positions relating to development, housing and salinity.

Regrettably it was not political circumstances that forced his retirement from Parliament but ill health. On medical advice he cut short what was a developing and significant political career. In 1983 he retired having served the Parliament for just on 10 years and having made a great contribution. It is interesting to note his comment on leaving the Parliament:

... there are cynics who knock parliamentarians and the system, but for my part I really learned what democracy and service to the community are about.

I recall many parliamentarians during the years since he left speaking to me about him in glowing terms. They talked about not just what a remarkable feat it was for him to win and hold what had been regarded by the Liberal Party as a natural constituency of the then Country Party but more importantly about the contribution he made to the life of the Parliament.

Many former members have spoken very highly of his contribution. Indeed when he resigned, Jeff Kennett, the then opposition leader, said he had been:

... a splendid minister and an aggressive fighter in the interests of the people of his electorate.

He was also described by Jeff Kennett as a genuine, dinky-di Aussie.

He was very active in the community, notwithstanding his retirement from Parliament. Although he suffered a stroke in 1996 which left him somewhat handicapped, he continued to pursue his interests and community life. Aside from generally being a well-known and highly respected member of his community, he was passionately convinced about his role as an advocate for Swan Hill. He was very proud of that relationship. He was quoted at the time in the local newspaper as saying:

It (Swan Hill) has been so good to me and given me everything I have ever had in life. I have many truly wonderful friends here.

One of his proudest moments was lighting the Riverside Park cauldron when the Sydney Olympic flame came to Swan Hill in 2000. This task was made difficult because of his stroke; nevertheless, he was cheered on by more than 10 000 supporters. Both Alan and Joyce shared a long association with the French town of Villers-Bretonneux and its people, a place that has often been described as a piece of Australia in France, following World War I. Alan had two uncles who fought there during the war. In the 1970s, Alan and Joyce established with the town of Villers-Bretonneux an exchange program for Robinvale students.

Alan has actually filled his election promise to every person in the Swan Hill electorate. When he retired a great tribute was paid to his main support, Joyce and his family. He said:

With such a large electorate as Swan Hill, I don't know how I could have managed without their help and encouragement.

To the family of Alan Raymond Wood, to all his children — Bill, Karen, Marian, Stuart, Robert and Michael — and to Joyce and to their 16 grandchildren, I pay my respects and condolences on behalf of the Liberal Party.

Hon. B. W. BISHOP (North Western) — I rise on behalf of The Nationals to support the condolence motion on the passing of Alan Raymond Wood. In addition, I would like to express my sympathy, and also that of my wife, Brenda, to Joyce and the family. Alan Raymond Wood was born in Swan Hill on 18 June 1927 and died on 3 October this year, aged 78 years. He married Joyce Wilkinson on 26 February 1954. They had six children — Bill, Karen, Marian, Stuart, Robert and Michael. Alan's occupation of real estate agent and valuer was well known to all in the area. He was a real Swan Hill boy — a real Mallee boy actually. He was educated at both the Swan Hill state and high schools.

I obviously did not serve with Alan Wood when he was in the Parliament, but I certainly had known him all my life. In the Parliament Alan's contributions were well known. He was in this Parliament almost 10 years. In fact, he was elected in May 1973 as the MLA for Swan Hill, and he resigned due to ill health in March 1983. During the time he was in the Parliament he was appointed as the Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs from May 1979 to February 1981, Assistant Minister for State Development, Decentralisation and Tourism from February 1980 to December 1980,

Minister of Public Works and Minister for Property and Services from December 1980 to April 1982, and the minister responsible for ports and harbours from December 1980 to April 1982. He was a member of the State Development Committee from 1976 to 1979, a member of the House Committee from 1982 to 1983, and a member of the Salinity Committee from 1982 to 1983.

Alan also served in the 22nd infantry battalion of the 2nd Australian Imperial Force in Australia and overseas. After that he came back and worked in the family business, H. A. Wood and Company, a real estate business in Swan Hill. Then he was also a director of H. A. Wood and Company in Melton. I am sure my memory serves me right that this very respected and old real estate firm has been going for four generations. It has certainly been a part of the Swan Hill district for many years.

Alan served in local government as a Swan Hill borough and city councillor from 1959 to 1974. He was mayor from 1964 to 1965. He had many other public duties at that time including the Swan Hill Sewerage Authority, the Swan Hill Waterworks Trust and the Swan Hill Museum, and he was president and life member of the Swan Hill Chapter of Jaycees. He was involved with the RSL and Legacy as well.

I saw more of Alan Wood after he retired in 1983. At that time he worked for a German company called Saartch, which had a very innovative shed design. Alan was working as an agent for that company and placed those sheds not only in the Mallee area but also in many other parts of Victoria. I well remember the trips we had on the commuter air service from Swan Hill to Essendon. That is how we used to get to and from Melbourne. I was with the Australian Wheat Board then. Alan and I had some connection. We could chat about those sorts of issues. On the way home we would catch a cab together or certainly meet at Essendon Airport before we boarded the plane to go to Swan Hill. Woodsy — as we knew him — was a gregarious sort of a bloke.

If you got out there and if it was a warm day — and even if it was not a warm day — you would have a drink with Alan in the bar at the Essendon Airport. Then we would load ourselves into the six or seven-seat Navajo aeroplane. You had to use careful judgment because it took about an hour and a half to get to Swan Hill. If you had had a few drinks with Alan, you had to be careful because there were no facilities on that aeroplane. You had to take fine care and have a plan before you boarded the plane and wended your way back to Swan Hill.

Woodsy, or Alan, was known as one of the most gregarious characters you would ever find in a day's drive. I suppose it was a wonderful trait to have as a politician. Everyone knew him. I suppose that occurs to most of us in political life. Many people know us, but the difference with Alan Woods was that he knew the people as well. He not only knew them, he knew their mother and father and all their kids. It did not matter where you went with Woodsy, he knew everyone. He was certainly well known throughout the Swan Hill area.

Alan enjoyed retirement very much. In fact I suppose, like we do in this place, he did a bit of acting. Not many people know that Alan Woods did a bit of acting. That was revealed to everyone at the funeral in Swan Hill. He also travelled Australia quite widely and had an overseas attachment — as the Honourable Philip Davis mentioned — to the town in France called Villers-Bretonneux. There is a very good reason why he had an attachment to that town. In 1984 Villers-Bretonneux became the sister town of Robinvale which at the time was part of the Swan Hill electorate but which as part of the redistribution has been shifted into the Mildura electorate.

The history of that relationship is that Australian soldiers freed the town of Villers-Bretonneux during the First World War. Further to that, Robinvale was named after Robin Cuttle, who was shot down in the particular area of Villers-Bretonneux during the First World War. So there is a very strong connection between Robinvale and Villers-Bretonneux. Alan Wood visited Villers-Bretonneux many times. In fact if my memory serves me right — and I am pretty sure I am right — he and Joyce put together a tour there which was well advertised and they took people over to Villers-Bretonneux. They kept that relationship for many years to come. Alan was well known in that particular area.

I must report — and I suppose it reflects on my country background — that it was a great state funeral in Swan Hill. It was held in a Catholic church. Alan Woods was Uniting Church in religion, but the funeral was held in the Catholic church because there was not enough room in the Uniting church. The service was jointly celebrated by two clergy. One was the Reverend Maurice Wildish, the Uniting Church minister, and the other was Catholic priest Father Bill Melican. It was a great day and Woodsy would have enjoyed it because it never stopped raining all day — and we know how the crops are in need of rain. Alan would have had a marvellous time, thinking about the rain falling during that day particularly when the crops were in need of it.

Alan was a real estate bloke, and the family business had an auction that day which everyone went down to after the funeral. Some extremely good prices were evident at the land sale that day, so Alan would have enjoyed the day — with the rain, what it did for the crops and about improving land prices.

I am sure that Alan and Joyce would have been proud of the kids as they told stories of his life during the service. It started off when he was a young fellow who worked in the bank at Moulamein, which is not far away in today's terms — about 67 kilometres. But Alan did not have a car. He used to ride his bike over there, work during the week and ride his bike back. He would stay in the pub as many people did when they started off working in country areas.

They told stories from throughout his life. The sad part of Alan's life came when he suffered a stroke in 1996. There is no doubt it knocked Alan about physically, but I can assure members it did not deter his spirit one bit. He was always on for a yarn, whether about state politics, local politics or whatever you wanted to talk about. He also became a bit of a dangerous character at that stage when due to his lack of mobility he gained the ownership of a gofer — that is, a motorised cart. Reverend Wildish told how Alan on his gofer used to dart out from behind cars in the street. But it certainly gave him some of the mobility that he lost when he suffered his stroke.

The funeral was attended by one of the largest RSL contingents I have seen, which showed the respect of the returned servicemen for Alan Woods, and of course the Legacy people were there as well.

The family had a private burial ceremony. After that and after the church service finished everyone retired to the big town hall in Swan Hill, which was absolutely full. The family put on a film clip of Alan and Joyce's 50th wedding anniversary. I will just touch on a couple of issues that came out of that. One piece of film was of Alan lighting the cauldron on 28 July 2000 when the Olympic flame came through Swan Hill. He was confined to his wheelchair, but he stood up to light the cauldron, which took a fair bit of effort. He was pretty proud of that effort.

I remember another instance. As I said, the stroke might have substantially knocked him about physically but it did not dampen his spirits. A previous local government council took the very courageous step during its tenure of wanting to close a road in the city of Swan Hill. Alan became incensed about that, so he got in his wheelchair, got the harness back on and applied his strong talents of representation to that cause. The

upshot, due to the community response to all of those things, was that the council representation changed significantly at the next council elections. He had a couple of goes in relation to that.

Alan Wood led a full life, and he was the local champion. The headline of the local paper, the Swan Hill *Guardian*, said it all. It read 'A city mourns'. Again on behalf of The Nationals I extend my sympathies to Joyce and the family and commend Alan Wood on a job well done.

Hon. W. A. LOVELL (North Eastern) — I rise to join this condolence motion today for Alan Wood who was more than just a member of Parliament; he was a highly regarded and well-known member of the Swan Hill and district community. He was a family man, a great community activist and a real contributor.

Alan began his life of public service when he was elected to the Swan Hill Borough Council in 1959, and was the mayor at the time Swan Hill was proclaimed a city in 1965. In 1983, when Alan was forced to retire from this Parliament due to ill health, he did so with grace and dignity. He described his 10 years in Parliament as a warm and wonderful experience, and he said of his time as the member for the Swan Hill district, 'I have thoroughly enjoyed being involved with so many people in the area I love'. He paid tribute to his wife and family, saying, 'With such a large electorate as Swan Hill, I could not have fulfilled my role without their tremendous support and encouragement'.

At the funeral service for Alan Wood his six children paid tribute to their father and his commitment to them as a family. They also spoke of their involvement in their father's parliamentary career. Alan's youngest son told the story of the day their father had to attend an important community event in Robinvale. Alan, his wife, Joyce, and their six children all piled into the car and set off for Robinvale. On the way one of them asked Alan where the function was being held, and Alan replied that he did not know but it would be easy to find because there would be a lot of cars parked outside. So the family arrived in Robinvale, found a venue with a lot of cars parked outside and went inside to enjoy the celebrations. After a while Alan wondered why they had not asked him to address the community, only to find that they were at the wrong function! However, the family members of the young person celebrating their 21st birthday were extremely honoured that their local MP and his family had attended the birthday party.

As an MP Alan Wood did not only serve his own electorate but he also served as the Minister of

Immigration and Ethnic Affairs from 1979 to 1981, Assistant Minister for State Development, Decentralisation and Tourism in 1980, Minister of Public Works and Minister for Property and Services from 1980 to 1982, and the minister responsible for ports and harbours from 1980 to 1982. During Alan Wood's time as the Minister of Public Works the state of Victoria undertook the restoration of the historic Shamrock Hotel in Bendigo, and, as the minister responsible, Alan was the overseer of that project. The Shamrock is a magnificent reminder of the former gold rush era in the Bendigo region.

Alan Wood was also responsible for the then Liberal government's plans to build new state offices in Bendigo that would have accommodated 200 people from 15 different departments. During his term as minister he unveiled a scale model of the building, but unfortunately the project was never to get off the ground because of the Cain Labor government, which shelved the plan — and to this day government departments are spread all over Bendigo in a number of different premises. It was a real shame that Alan's vision was not achieved way back then.

After his retirement from Parliament Alan continued to serve the Swan Hill community in a voluntary capacity. In later life he was dependent on a motorised wheelchair to get around town, and only last year he staged a protest rally at the only traffic lights in Swan Hill to ensure that the council would provide footpaths that were wheelchair friendly. This was not done out of self-interest but in order to make wheelchair access more readily available for the many elderly and disabled residents of Swan Hill who are dependent on wheelchairs.

Three years ago Alan Wood took on the Swan Hill Rural City Council when it tried to close down a section of Pritchard Street without consulting the community. Alan's campaign was responsible for six of the seven sitting councillors losing their seats in the following election, and Pritchard Street remains open to through traffic to this day.

Although Alan retired from politics in 1983, he never turned away a person in need of assistance or advice. To the very end the people of Swan Hill would turn to him, and he would always provide that advice or assistance. Alan Wood never saw himself as disabled or as growing old. He had a wonderful outlook on life and was well known for his traditional glass of red wine with lunch each day.

Alan Wood was born and lived in Swan Hill, the area he loved for his entire life. He devoted his life to

ensuring a better future for the region. He loved people and the people of Swan Hill loved him.

In a recent conversation I had with several Swan Hill residents they informed me that since his retirement the area has not had a parliamentary representative of the calibre of Alan Wood. I offer my deepest condolences to his wife, Joyce, and his six children and 16 grandchildren.

The PRESIDENT — I also wish to join in the condolence motion before the house for the late Honourable Alan Wood. Alan Wood served as the member for Swan Hill in the Legislative Assembly between 1973 and 1983. While our parliamentary careers did not coincide, I can see from the impressive list of his achievements that Alan made an immense contribution to the Parliament and the state of Victoria more generally. Some of the comments made by the Honourable Wendy Lovell about his ongoing commitment to his beloved Swan Hill after his retirement showed his commitment to that community even after leaving this place.

During his long service to the Parliament Alan served as a minister in a number of portfolios, including as Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Assistant Minister for State Development, Decentralisation and Tourism, Minister of Public Works, Minister for Property and Services and minister responsible for ports and harbours. As well as those portfolio responsibilities, Alan served on numerous committees, including the State Development Committee, the House Committee and the Salinity Committee. Alan's record also shows that he served in the 22nd infantry battalion of the Australian Imperial Force, both in Australia and abroad.

Alan was born and educated in Swan Hill and became a committed advocate for the region. He not only used his profession as a councillor, MLA and real estate agent and valuer to advance the community's interests but also made significant contribution by way of his service to numerous authorities, boards and other community bodies. As indicated to the house by the Honourable Barry Bishop, who was kind enough to represent me at the state funeral of Mr Wood while I was attending the funeral of the Honourable Bruce Chamberlain, the pragmatism of people in country Victoria removes even the difficulties of religion. As the Anglican church was not big enough for the service, it was conducted in the Catholic church to ensure that everybody could be accommodated. That such a feat was able to be organised shows the respect Alan Wood had from the community in Swan Hill. For centuries the Anglican Church and Catholic Church have not quite

got together, but he was able to pull it off on that occasion. After the private burial there was a huge attendance at the town hall. That is testimony to Alan and his commitment to his constituents and to his community after he left this place.

I wish to offer my sincere condolences to Alan's wife, Joyce, and his four sons and two daughters, as well as to the rest of the Wood family.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Mr LENDERS (Minister for Finance) — I move:

That, as a further mark of respect to the memories of the late Honourables Bruce Anthony Chamberlain, AM, and Alan Raymond Wood, the house adjourn until tomorrow at 9.30 a.m.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned 5.19 p.m.