

Welcome by Grove Galligan

Hello. I am Grove Galligan, Brian's eldest child.

As I look around this place I see so many people I love. There's also faces I recognise but can't put a name to and other people I am yet to meet. This congregation is testament to Brian Galligan's rich, fulfilling and expansive life.

On behalf of my family - Roslyn, Briony and Justin - I would like to welcome you all.

Dad would love this occasion: surrounded by the people he loved in a place that was like home to him. Thank you all for coming today.

I'd particularly like to thank those of you who've travelled from afar. Dad had planned to be on the Gold Coast right now spending time with his extended family. He loved visiting people, going out of his way to maintain and renew friendships.

I'd also like to sincerely thank Father Michael O'Toole who was with Dad and our family in his final hours, Father Frank Brennan (Dad's cousin) and Dad's good friend Father Bill Uren.

I invite you to join us in our reflections - both sorrowful and joyful - celebrating this man who blessed all of our lives in different ways. And whose peaceful passing was his final gift, to ease our pain of loss and help reconcile that he is now gone, but forever with us.

Eulogy by Justin Galligan

INTRO

Hello, my name is Justin Galligan. I am the youngest son of Brian John Galligan and am here today to talk about his life on behalf of my brother Grove, sister Briony and mother Roslyn. I think it is apt that so many of the people here today have come to celebrate the life of Brian at a time of the year that he so loved to celebrate with many of you. Dad loved his family, and it was at these times around Christmas when we travelled back to Queensland that I believe my father was at his happiest.

EARLY LIFE

To understand my father, it is important to understand his early life. Brian was born in Dalby, Queensland on the 28th of September 1945. He was 1 of 9 children, 7 boys, 2 girls. The eldest was a girl Mary, followed by Brian, then Dennis, Tony, Paul, Brendan, Dez, Chris and finally another girl Gay. His father Jack Galligan was a farmer and his mother Muriel was a nurse in Kingaroy before marrying. The farm was located on the Darling Downs, they grew wheat and ran sheep.

In his early years Brian went to a 1 teacher school, riding his bike 5.5 miles there and back. His sister Mary recalls Brian with a rope on a windy day pulling younger brothers Paul or Brendan along on the journey. I recall stories Dad would tell of Brown snakes sometimes encountered sunning themselves on the path. Rather than stopping, the kids would build up speed, then raise their legs from the pedals to the handlebars.

At the age of 13 Dad began boarding school at Downlands College in Toowoomba. It was at Downlands that he developed a great love for playing tennis, swimming and Rugby. At the end of Year 11 Brian went to Douglas Park in New South Wales to join the MSC's - Missionary of Sacred Heart. He stayed for 4 years but left the seminary at 21 and returned to Brisbane to complete a Bachelor of Commerce. After graduation he began working as an accountant at Arthur Anderson, studying economics part time and taking subjects in political philosophy that sparked his interest.

Throughout this period Brian would return to the farm on his holidays. Being the eldest boy, Brian was his father's right-hand man and they were a good duo. Dad was good with the little ones and his father Jack trusted him. He was a good worker and strong young man. His sister Mary recalls that at harvest time he would help with everything including driving the wheat truck into the local silo.

Letter from Brendan Galligan to Brian:

Dear Brian, I am very sorry that you are not well. It's little more than a year ago that you were here and all was well. I want you to know that you always were a great, oldest brother and I love you and very much appreciate all of your support over the years. I remember when Mum told me you were leaving the seminary and coming home at Christmas I took it literally and assumed you were going to take up the farm. I remember asking you about this and was most disappointed when you told me that you were going to pursue your studies instead. Perhaps if you had become a farmer back then Paul, Chris and I would have followed. What a powerhouse we would have made. But life took a different tack and I am delighted and humbled at how fortunate we have been.

Do you remember you had a book on making toys from wood? You would give us younger ones a choice of toy and that's what we got for Christmas. One year I picked a wheelbarrow and it was a fine wheelbarrow. But when I saw Paul's choice I had a moment of regret. He chose a wheat truck that had a steering wheel that actually worked and carried a load of miniature bags of wheat each sewn in the proper fashion with ears and so on. In fact I remember you and Dad trying to be discreet in the lobby one night

with a pile of wheat on the floor making those bags, trying to shoo us away. Good luck with that. You painted them in the old laundry and covered the window with a bag. So, when you weren't around it was very easy for me to check on progress.

I remember the cart you made and hitching a calf to it. You had to run alongside to control the beast but we had a great time riding it. Kites were another favorite. Do you remember making a kite that could release a parachute? The parachute was made with a piece of tar paper or plastic that was attached with strings to a large nut. A separate string in addition to the control string was attached to the kite that released the parachute at the right altitude and it floated to earth. Quite the innovator.

DAD AND MUM

Brian met my mother Roslyn at 23 on holidays in the Gold Coast - There was a cabaret organised at Lennon's Broadbeach Hotel and the boys had heard there were girls from the Coolangatta guesthouses coming.

After Dad asked Mum for a dance, they got chatting. Mum inclined to be quite provocative did not deter Dad, he took this in his stride and they hit it off. They met on the beach the next day and after 3 days together Mum returned home to Perth.

Mum wrote Brian a letter on the plane home and sent it the day she returned. Days passed and no response. Mum wondered how she could have misjudged this bloke. After 4 weeks and on advice from her mother that letters do go missing, she wrote once more – this time a brief note.

It turned out that Dad was at the family farm rather than the address in Toowong that she was given, and hadn't received any of the letters. Once he did, he responded immediately with what Mum says was a lovely letter. Memorably there was a grasshopper plague at the time and Dad included a gift for my mother, it was a Grasshopper leg and he wrote a token of his esteem and affection. Mum recalls that this double edged compliment was typical of Dads style.

They were married in 1970 on January 22, and had three children: Grove, born in Toronto, Canada, Briony, born in Hobart, and myself, born in Canberra.

Those who have spent time with Mum and Dad know how passionately they would argue, how they disagreed and really rowed and fought. Yet, Mum also reflects how after their arguments, they would also talk major things through and she always felt Dad was very open to being challenged. Dad deeply respected Mum, life was not boring and despite the arguments there was always a deep love shared. They encouraged each other to be curious and take risks. They shared a passion for literature, reading and travel.

ABOUT DAD

Dad was more interested in the relationships he had and people around him than materials things.

He did not care for cars, flash watches were not his thing and clothes were necessary but not important. Dad sent me to a Jesuit boys school. It was a private school and fees excluded some from attending. Many of my friends fathers were lawyers, doctors, accountants and businessmen and they drove expensive cars. It was a Mercedes, BMW or Range Rover.

This was not Dads style and I remember friends being surprised when my father would pull up in his 1987 Toyota Tarago. And Dad drove that car until the engine stopped, then he got the engine reconditioned drove it some more, until my brother Grove inherited it, then I and my sister Briony.

While Dad eschewed displays of wealth he did have a refined taste for simple luxuries. He loved the markets, fresh fruit: mangoes, cherries, oranges and would make everyone breakfast. There'd always be a plate of fruit on the table, classical music blaring. He also loved sipping his weak black tea out of a fine china cup.

Dad was a teacher. But he was also a stirrer who loved to niggle. He would delight in an argument and the chance to exercise his rational reasoning. He taught us kids how to ride a bike, body surf a wave and read a book. At times we were part of his academic life, when Grove took a politics subject at university that Dad was co-teaching - he was pleasantly surprised at what a good lecturer Dad was and how much better it was listening to him at University than being lectured at home.

This meeting of family and academic life came together again when Brian's granddaughter Georgia came home to her father Grove complaining that her year 4 school assignment on the constitution was boring. Grove informed Georgia that her grandfather was an expert on this topic who had written several books on the matter. Before you knew it, Dad was standing up the front of a classroom of 9 and 10 year olds with both Georgia and her brother Nikau in the audience, asking them if they had a copy of the constitution, urging them to talk to their parents about who they were going to vote for in the upcoming federal election and to agitate for the issues that were important to them.

FARM LIFE

Growing up on a farm Dad had a deep connection to the land. After settling in Melbourne, he and Mum first bought in the Otways, then Birregurra. Dad loved the farms recollecting so much to Mum in his last days.

The farms were something that sustained Dad into retirement. In a sense the farms brought him full circle, regaining some of what he lost when his father died and the farm he grew up on was sold. He shared the farming life with his family and that brought us together - rounding up cattle, building fences and sheds, keeping track of breed values and naming the new season's calves. And, in his final months, Dad yearned to get back up to the farm. He delighted in his last trips to Birregurra and it was always his hope to get back there.

READING WRITING

Briony has a number of recollections about Dad, and the importance of reading, writing and storytelling between the two of them, and the love that floated in that space.

Briony says:

Dad was open minded about certain things and fixed on others. Dad had strong convictions, yet was up for a challenge, could see other perspectives.

I remember him in the family home, writing from 4:30am, waking up to this light warm glow in another room. Dad used to work at home and move around the house like a sundial, working in the rooms with the nicest light. In the morning he sat at the kitchen table, then he moved to his study, then the orange living room.

Dad had a huge appetite for reading history, philosophy, literature and a cheeky sense of humour. As a kid, he told me he was suspicious of people who don't like stories.

During the last six months of his life, I spent time every week with him. I would read to him because it had become difficult for him to read and write. I think it calmed us both. In his last weeks, we read a story called The House Plans about a blueprint for a house on the edge of a village. The owner of the house befriends a hunter and the plans they draw together become more vivid as the possibility of the actual house recedes.

Eventually the owner plans to move out of the valley, but can't bring themselves to do it and returns. "The evening was serene. The light was smooth and soft, the earth

paralyzed, and I, far below, the only moving creature.” In the last week of his life, Dad told me that after a life of structuring his thoughts and being so focussed on academic research, he was now moving loosely between his memories, things and people coming up that he hadn’t thought about in thirty years. Dad was at ease with how his mind was shifting between what was in this world, and what was imagined or in another during that last week and would have long conversations with Mum about his dreams and life.

Dad was a remarkably effective communicator but a very short text messenger. I received texts like; “Briony, Garden Sunday 3pm”. I told him off for never including niceties such as: “Hi Briony, how are you? How’s your week been? ..Love dad..” etc. He responded, “Briony, all of that’s implied.”

When I read to Dad, I was also trying to imply, I love you, I know you are going, I will miss you terribly, but here we are, now.

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CONCLUSION

Thanks especially to Mum for looking after Dad with great love and care, and we are grateful for the support received from Mary and Alan in the last few months and from many family and friends in his final days, as well as all the thoughtful messages sent by those that knew my father. Overwhelmingly people have referred to Brian as a lovely, intelligent and warm man, a good man, who could talk to anybody on anybody’s terms, and who loved ideas. We’ll miss him.

Eulogy by Denis Galligan, read by Mary Ford

In Honour and Memory of Brian

My family joins you in bidding farewell to Brian, loved and admired brother, brother-in-law to Martha, uncle to Francesca and Finbar, uncle-in-law to Daniel and Rebecca, and great uncle to Evie Rose, Rowan, and little Tean. Our sadness in losing Brian is deepened by not being able to be there to mark his passing and to say goodbye.

The sense of loss at Brian's leaving us, so early and so unexpected, is truly devastating. My earliest memories include Brian, my elder brother by two years: tall, strong, athletic, and very clever, yet gentle in manner and kindly in disposition.

Memories as clear as if yesterday. As boys on the farm at Denis Downs, rounding up the sheep, riding our horses to school, to Formartin State School, a one-room, one-teacher school most of whose pupils were Galligans, with Brian on Blackie, me on Prince, before giving in to the modern world and exchanging horses for bicycles.

Together at Downlands, where on my first evening away from home, lonely and bewildered, to sit on the bank at sundown with Brian and his circle of friends was an immense consolation. To have such an accomplished elder brother in the school was for me a source of quiet but endless pride. After school, and for Brian a stint in the seminary, later at Queensland University, living together with our brother Tony and the Kelsey boys at Terrace Street, the fine old home our parents bought to house us during our student days, but which needed Brian's considerable carpentry skills to make suitable.

Our lives later took different paths, Brian's to Canada, mine to England. We both chose the academic life, probably the seeds were sewn those days long ago, gathered around our Uncle Grove Johnson, on his visits to the farm, as he regaled us with stories of old Europe, gave us a taste for history and literature, showed to our fascination that one could learn to speak Italian, and perhaps, most critically, introduced us to the realm of ideas.

Despite the distances separating us, Brian's returning to Australia, my staying in England, we saw much of him over many years, in Oxford and Melbourne and Toowoomba. During the three years we spent in Melbourne, Brian and Roslyn welcomed with warmth my family, and made us feel honoured guests in their stately home at Ivanhoe, and once again smoothed my passage from one life to another. To Oxford, Brian was a frequent visitor, including as a Visiting Fellow at Merton College, which I know gave him much satisfaction. We saw a lot of him during those months, his weekly visit for Sunday lunch, well- earned after walking, as was his custom, the five miles from Merton to Beckley.

I followed Brian's academic career with interest and pride, at Latrobe, Tasmania, the ANU, the crowning achievement his long tenure of a professorship of politics at Melbourne University. His books and other writings will live on, his standing in the academic community is secure, the esteem of his students for his knowledge and dedication will long endure.

From early boyhood, Brian and I had much in common, ideas to share, experiences to relate, memories to bind us, academic gossip to exchange. To Martha my wife, whom I met at his wedding to Roslyn, he was a much loved brother-in-law, a source of good company. To Francesca and Finbar as children, he was an uncle who took keen interest in them, encouraged them in their school and university, always kind and considerate. Both have expressed their fond memories of Brian and their sadness at his passing.

By the old family home Clonmore at Cooranga North, where our father Jack grew-up and where Brian and I spent many happy holidays, with Uncles Tom and Dick and Joe, and Aunty Clare, and not least dear Polly. Just down the hill from the house there was a windmill trough for the cattle to drink; you could see it from the house. A place Brian and I knew well, a place to play, to feed the pigs, to chase away the dingoes.

I end with a poem about that very windmill trough. It was written in 1940 by our father's cousin Pat Galligan, shortly before he left for England to join the RAF and to meet his death a few months later at the age of 21.

Perhaps Brian knew the poem; it would have brought back happy memories, a wry smile of recognition.

By The Windmill Trough

by Pat Galligan

“Bush birds come to drink at evening

By the windmill trough,

Flit down to drink as thoughts that fly to my mind: ---

And the Bunyas purple in the fading glow

Beyond Cooranga’s hill,

And the Rhodes-grass pale on the hill

Beyond the blue-stump smoke,

Creeping past the dead white-box

Where once a million starry leaves

Shook in the wind with a crackling like flames.

There the slender ring-barked gums

Lift silver lightnings in the opal sky;

A chorus of kookaburras laugh,

Butcher birds chime as angelus bells, and a choir of nun-robed magpies

Hymn the close of day.

Denis Galligan

Oxford

18t December 2019

Letter to Brian Galligan from Lisa Ford read by Mary Ford

There are so many things I love about you. I love your wicked humour, the sparkle in your eye. I love your ramshackle houses and their elegant chaos. You taught me that a good life does not have to be orderly, it just has to be full. I love the world you opened up for me, as your uncle did for you. I would not have dreamt of being an academic if you did not demonstrate the value and pleasure of intellectual generosity and life-long learning. I love the way you always took the trouble to visit... in New York, in Sydney... wherever. Most of all I love that I did not think twice about asking to stay at your house, understanding that I would be fed and feted by someone, driven around and looked after. You always went out of your way to remind us that we were family and that family means hospitality, trouble and care.

Safe journey, dear uncle. You will be dearly missed.