

JOHN CARMODY – LIFE MEMBERSHIP

The East Charlton Tribune was first published on 20th May, 1876. On that day, the editor proudly announced to his readers that “East Charlton stands on the eastern bank of the Avoca River in a beautiful valley between two ranges of hills, and a distant twenty miles from Wedderburn and twenty-eight miles from St Arnaud. The country around is of a very rich nature and bids fair to become the finest agricultural district in the colony. The whole of the land for many miles around has been selected. The wheat grown in the vicinity of East Charlton during the past season realized the highest price of any in Victoria.”

Declared a town in 1885 (and re-named “Charlton”) more than 150 years later, Charlton’s proud boast is that it remains a productive farming town which although having weathered many difficulties over the years and having altered considerably to adapt to changing times, nevertheless retains the spirit and resilience of its early pioneers.

If ever the adage which follows applies to any person it applies to John Carmody: “you can take the boy out of Charlton but you will never take Charlton out of the boy.” Spirit and resilience is undoubtedly the Carmo way.

Educated by the Jesuits at their college in Kew and within the University of Melbourne (where he was admitted to the degrees of law and commerce), before his appointment to the County Court (where he has quickly gained a reputation as a respected judge), John was a skilled and effective advocate, a consummate barrister who understood and implemented the best traditions of the Victorian Bar – the “cab rank” principle of appearing for clients without fear or favour and a scrupulous honesty in the presentation of his cases.

As with his brother, Roger (a Corder Medallist for the best & fairest at the Blacks) John was a classic product of University football. A resident of Newman College (and coach of the College XVIII), he was allocated to Blues where his pre-season was usually constituted by two games in the Reserves after which he was ready to resume his place in the Seniors as the shortest full back in the competition. Many a slippery forward came to grief in the grasp of a Carmody tackle perfected by years of corralling cross-bred ewes in one of the 320 acre paddocks on the family farm. For the unsuspecting and hapless goalsneak, there was no safe haven from the mud of the University Oval, even at the Trinity end.

Following several happy and productive years at Blues, John returned to his alma mater turning out for the Old Xaverians where he played in their 1980 and 1981 premierships teams.

With the capable Dianne by his side and having settled down with three children in a family which John quips is remarkable for the fact that they all remain on extremely friendly terms, John’s involvement with University football was put on hold. But not for ever.....

In 2005 history repeated itself: Dan Carmody turned out for the Blues. To the great satisfaction of John and Tony (whom had been team mates in 1973) Dan debuted with Dirk Heinz and the strong family connection between these families and Blues endures to this day. Various Orange Boy, Drinks Waiter, After Match Cleaner, Sometime Sideline Selector, Magnet Board Operator and most importantly No. 2 Chef to the Master Chef himself, Tony McInerney, Carmo is simply the heart and soul of Blues and mentor to many a young Blues’ player.

Earlier this year John was awarded a Certificate of Merit by the Victorian Amateur Football Association in recognition of his service to the life and times of football at University Blues and at the Old Xaverians and as a mark of the esteem in which he is held by the football community generally.

Considered by two rusted on Blacks' guys as the obvious candidate for the job, in 2010 John was conscripted to the Presidency of the MUFC by the then retiring President, Dr Simon Costello and by me as General Secretary. He was accosted by Simon at a Xavier reunion when John was deep in discussion with a fellow boarder on the state of the wheat price and a day later accosted by me on the steps of Owen Dixon Chambers West when he was deep in thought about the case of one of his many clients! The rest as they say is history.

John's legacy to the MUFC by way of his involvement with Melbourne University Sport and Property and Campus Services in the construction of the new Pavilion has been profound and its two great tribes owe him a huge debt of gratitude. Put simply, the Pavilion not only speaks for itself but has set the standard for future generations of the black and the blue.

I am pleased to announce that, in addition to receiving nominations for life membership from Blacks and Blues in the usual way, the Board has taken the unusual step of resolving unanimously to nominate John Carmody for life membership of the Melbourne University Football Club. It is indeed fitting that Blues and Blacks should acknowledge John's contribution in this way.

A.M. Donald
General Secretary
Melbourne University Football Club