

Reflections on Paul Ruwoldt

Reader: Dave Stewart, Paul's friend, on behalf of the Ruwoldt Family (at the U.S. service); David Spackman, Max Ruwoldt's friend, on behalf of the Ruwoldt Family (at the Australia service)

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Date: January 28 & February 6, 2009

Paul was born the second of three sons [Simon and Nicolas] to Max and Heather on March 21st, 1966 in Mount Gambier, South Australia.

Paul attended Yahl Primary and Grant High Schools where he didn't have difficulty achieving good results, but teachers made note of his interests in other fields - namely the footy field and the cricket field. He spent his fair share of time on the tennis court which proved valuable in later life. Paul would play junior tennis in the morning then ride his bike into town to play senior grade. He kept this quiet up to and including when he finally beat Natalie.

Paul was never happier than when he was off on the farm, just wandering about on his bike, chasing down some rabbits with his gang of ferrets. Yes, ferrets.

Paul always liked to take on a challenge. And when the teacher of his final year of high school told him he wouldn't have much chance of qualifying, he put down his cricket bat, his footy, his tennis racket, his ferrets, and his head into the books. In the last month before final exams, he threw himself into study and gained matriculation with a pass in all subject and credits in two.

After leaving school, Paul embarked on a career as a boiler maker welder. After 3 years he completed his apprenticeship, once again with higher than average results. But after one week on full wages he decided to go to the college at Warnambool and get his BA degree. During his three years at college he made frequent visits home to catch up with friends and relatives, and of course to take the ferrets out for a run. On one occasion he rode his bicycle the full 130 miles home, calling his mother from the pub on the way to let her know he was coming. While in Warnambool, he signed up as a voluntary lifeline counselor helping people in need, a charitable practice would follow many years later.

Paul supplemented his student income with his first entrepreneurial venture - the "washing mate". Paul was quoted in the local rag as saying; "I saw me poor ol' Mum bending her back, picking up the washing and hanging it on the line, and it just hit me - the washing mate." Crafted from scrap metal, the first prototype held the washing off the ground by hanging onto the post of the hills hoist. Paul went around to old peoples homes demonstrating. He even managed to rope in his brother Nicholas who happily demonstrated while Paul warmed up the crowd. I guess he made it in a way, when he

received a cease and desist letter from the lawyer of Hills Hoist saying the Washing Mate was infringing on their patent. Paul's Mum's was later quoted saying, "Paul's never watch me hang the washing or he would have known I have my own trolley".

After finishing his degree at Warnambool, Paul was accepted by the University of Canberra and went on to gain his diploma in Human Resource Management - a passion he was to pursue until the last years of his life. While in Canberra, he continued his entrepreneurial ways by providing part-time welding services, keeping himself in a car and importantly his first motorcycle - he was living like a king.

Paul then began his professional career with Price Waterhouse and quickly transferred to Melbourne where he immersed himself in the cultures of the big city. One day a US colleague visiting the Melbourne office suggested he would be suited for a move to the USA. He did that for what was supposed to be a 12 month stint. This had mixed blessing as he had to take a discharge from the army reserve which he had signed up to follow in his Dad's footsteps. After the 12 months passed, Paul wasn't done with the good 'ol US of A so he decided to stay on. That led to an opportunity with IBM and following that, Training Resources Group, Inc. (TRG). While here in the states, Paul signed up as a volunteer Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and continued that duty while his work schedule would allow.

Paul finally settled down in 2004 when he bought himself a house in Alexandria, VA. To the great amazement to his friends and neighbors he proceeded to completely gut it and renovate the entire place including the gardens most recently. The house stands today as a testimony to his tenacity and commitment to taking on a challenge.

Paul will be remembered with many fond memories by people across the world.

Perhaps one quote sums up best Paul's attitude through it all. Adam Lindsey Gordon, a poet from Paul's home town in Mount Gambier, once wrote:

*Life is nothing more than froth and bubble
but one thing stands like stone
Kindness in others troubles
Courage in your own*