

PAPER II

TRIBUTE TO BR JAMES GERARD HODDA CFC

Kevin Hodda, Aug., 1998.

My brother Jim was the eldest of six children born to our parents, Jim and Christina. There were three boys and three girls. Jim was born on 28 May 1917, in Victoria Street, Spring Hill, almost next door to St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace. It is extraordinary that his life should end practically where it began some eighty-one years earlier.

Jim answered the call to religious life at the age of fourteen years, and his association with the rest of our family was conducted at a distance as he served his training at Strathfield in Sydney. However, my father recounted many of the episodes of his early life, which indicated, that although Jim led a saintly life, his early years showed he was a very adventurous boy.

Dad told us of Jim's absence from home several times when he followed marching bands from visiting warships, which often berthed at the Mercantile and Dalgety wharves near where we lived at Harcourt Street, Teneriffe. This probably accounted for his love for band music, which he later expressed as promoter of the band at Gregory terrace at the time of the Cadet Corps.

The Exhibition Grounds were close to where we lived at Teneriffe, and Dad told us of the several times Jim disappeared from home, to be found later at the show, the speedway and Sheffield Shield cricket matches which were played there at that time.

On reflection, these early incidents enlarged his education, which assisted him later in his academic achievements. He was always interested in education, and as he said to me two days before he died, 'Kev, this has been a learning experience'.

My father was the Secretary of the St Stephen's Hibernian Friendly Society, and like all the children, Jim helped Dad in preparing the quarterly accounts,

which had to be assessed and posted. When the accounts were paid, Jim helped Dad allocate amounts to the various medical, funeral and sick pay funds. This early accounting experience was the forerunner to his position later in his career, as Bursar for the Christian Brothers' Community. He was renowned during his time as bursar that all the t's were crossed and the i's were dotted correctly.

My brother started at the Central Practicing School just down the road from Gregory Terrace. He next went to St James's for a short period and then when St Columban's opened at Albion in 1928 he was one of the first pupils there. He was the first Christian Brother old boy of St Columban's College.

He passed Scholarship at the age of eleven years, which was at an earlier age than the average at that time. This was the commencement of his academic career which included Bachelor of Science from Queensland University and Bachelor of Arts from Western Australia.

Jim also attended St Patrick's Convent school in the Valley for music lessons. When it became necessary for him to have his lessons on a Saturday morning, he had to attend All Hallows Convent. He amused and astounded many people by his claim to be a past pupil of All Hallows School and was entitled to be included in their Past Pupils' Association.

His religious life could have been influenced by at least two occasions which were historical. In 1927 he was an altar boy at St Patrick's Church in the Valley. He was selected to go to the Archbishop's House at Wynberg, New Farm to serve Mass for one of the Cardinals who was visiting from Rome for the laying of the foundation stone of the Holy Name Cathedral. A few years later in 1929 my father took him to Toowoomba for the consecration of the first bishop for that diocese - Dr James Byrne.

Of course, he also had a great admiration for the Brothers at St Columban's, particularly the headmaster, Br O'Driscoll.

Br Jim served as Principal at St Patrick's, Strathfield from 1956 to 1961, was Principal of Nudgee College from 1962 to 1967, was Principal of Gregory Terrace in 1972 and then became attached to the Provincial Council from 1973 to 1986. He served as Provincial Bursar from 1971 to 1992.

He was on the teaching staff at other colleges:- at Fremantle, Aquinas and Highgate in Western Australia from 1936 to 1950 and at St Mary's Toowoomba and St Laurence's South Brisbane. During his stay in Western Australia he became

interested in rowing and on his return to Queensland was instrumental in the formation of the Gregory Terrace Rowing Club.

Jim died at 5.00am last Tuesday morning. He had been in Wesley Hospital for approximately four weeks, suffering from heart failure and a subsequent massive stroke. He had company for a little time, a fellow patient - Don Tynan - who had attended St Columban's with him in 1930.

He was well cared for at the hospital by the medical and nursing among whom were a relative and daughters of old boys of Gregory Terrace and other Brothers' colleges and he was very comfortable in their presence.