

Tribute to Sir Laurence Street by Judge Alexander Street

State Funeral, Sydney Opera House, July 5, 2018

I would panegyrisé Laurence Street by reference to Love and Fire, but that address will take too long.

So I will speak of naming and lions.

When I was a little boy, I was very impressed by my father. He had four names- Laurence Lillingston Whistler Street.

I only had one name, Beetle.

Laurence is named after his uncle, Laurence Whistler Street, aged 21, killed in WW1 at Gallipoli in April 1915.

The Lillingston is his mother Jessie's maiden name.

He loved her very much, and like most of us, was inspired by both, his mother and his father.

Laurence also loved and was proud of his siblings, Belinda, Roger and Phillipa, and their families and his own family.

There was no greater gift in the power of naming that Laurence and Penny could give, than the name of Jessie to my youngest sister.

My eldest sister Sylvia was named after the mother of Laurence's lifelong best friend Derek McAlaren with whom he grew up and with whom he joined the Royal Australian Navy. The links change and the journey continues.

My brother Ken, was named after Laurence's father, Sir Kenneth, the next greatest gift in the power of naming.

My sister Sarah, was named for love, and after Laurence's great great Grandmother Sarah Leadbeater, who married Lieut. William Lawson, the Blue Mountains explorer and surveyor. We are all proud to acknowledge that Sarah was a former convict, and it was their granddaughter, who married Sir Philip Street, the first in the line of three Chief Justices.

Laurence knew the importance of the art of storytelling in building the fabric of society and virtues of self-worth, family, community and patriotism. Storytelling, fact and fiction, by performing and still arts, is inclusory and engages the full faculties of mankind.

I would take you on a brief merry dance as to Laurence – the father and Bushy, and the adventures we had with him, in his worn "baggy pirate gear" in a beautiful piece of sunburnt country, called Golden Valley on the Wollondilly River.

On a sweating chestnut stallion, in a hand greased American Western saddle, and homemade reins, rode a stockman with no shirt, except the sheet of flies, out into an untouched paddock, named the Far Run, to the rhythmic chain-saw competition of cicadas, where the wedge-tailed eagles had their eyries perched on Wombat Lookout, accompanied, by his offspring, riding behind, for a secret picnic spot, named Platypus Junction.

On the way, the Bushy rescued, off the top strand of a barb wire fence, a little sugar glider, nurtured it back to health, with segmented woodworms, and returned it to its home.

That stallion, Doctor, was lunged and broken from a colt by that Bushy. The stallion would come when called by that Bushy, who then would then ride him around the paddocks, mustering cattle, often without any reins or saddle, and on occasions holding onto Doctor's mane, swimming into the Hill Paddock Dam to escape the heat.

The Bushy tried to fatten weeners and sell them as forward stores in good seasons. We lost nearly all the beloved horses in a bushfire in 1979. Like most Bushies he battled fires, floods and droughts and would tell us around a campfire about stars in the Milky Way, and night sky navigation.

The Bushy taught his offspring bushcraft, bush songs or at least that is what I thought his repetition of Flanders and Swan constituted, a love of nature in all her untameable diversity, as well as the hardships, joys and beauty, in the rainbow of country life.

This iconic Opera House, and this ancient and historic, part of country, on which it stands, are epi-centres of storytelling for all Australians.

For Laurence this storytelling was inspired by Alexander Dumas, Omar Khayyam and the neighbours of Marathon Avenue and started with the quests of Sir Thomas Street, after being called to the Bar in 1653, who became a Chief Justice for three English counties and a Baron of the Exchequer and who married Lady Penelope Berkeley.

For most of my father's professional career like his two paternal forebears, he served under the Coat of Arms carrying a rampant Lion and Kangaroo, the New South Wales state coat of arms.

Laurence also served under the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, in WW2, and afterwards in the ADF and as a servant of the rule of law.

Laurence's own family coat of arms carries a rampant lion.

The Kangaroo from State and Commonwealth Coat of Arms, was also deeply inspiring for Laurence as he loved this incredible sunburnt country, and he both respected and loved our wonderful Indigenous people, their culture and heritage.

Laurence, was driven by a commitment to all the people in the union of the Commonwealth of Australia, by advancing the supremacy of the rule of law which he did, at the bar, on the bench, and after with his 50 cent coin and his litigation train approach, to mediation.

That is a democratic rule of law made and changeable by the people, for the people and of the people in the union of all Australians under the Constitution.

Laurence's mind sparkled with Latin, law and the endless quest of learning.

Laurence's heart was full of music, poetry, sunburnt country, family and friends.

From the seas and storms of life, Laurence has found his *tabula in nefragio*, AND, has unravelled the knot of human fate.

A GREAT LION HAS FALLEN.

On behalf of my siblings Sylvia, Ken, Sarah and Jessie, and I, forever and ever, beloved father, hail and farewell.