

He left a lasting legacy

Reginald John Mayes

Railwayman, Historian and Author

Born in Quorn SA 29 October 1927

Died in Adelaide 27 May 2008

Reg was an outstanding South Australian who led a life of service to the community and we are all beneficiaries of his untiring and visionary efforts.

He was born at Quorn as the firstborn of four children to Jack and Dolly Mayes - Reg, Alan, Jean and Verna. Reg grew up in the area and had a special devotion to the Flinders Ranges and the people of the surrounding districts. He married Amy Webb on 5 May 1951 and moved to Port Augusta.

Reg worked for the Commonwealth Railways for 41 years as Timekeeper, Roster Clerk, Compensation Officer and Assistant Personnel Officer, retiring in 1985.

He had many and varied interests including gemstones (especially opal mining), photography, steam trains and historic preservation. These pursuits led to a lifetime of volunteer work, including:

Secretary to the Port Augusta Camera Club.

Secretary to the Australian Railways Clerical Officers Association

Secretary to the Sub Branch of the Labor Party.

Secretary to the Spencer Gulf Industrial Promotion Committee

Secretary to the Port Augusta Branch of the South Australian National Trust

Secretary to Homestead Park Museum

He wrote the book "Pictorial History of Port Augusta", utilizing a rare collection of glass plate negatives and many of his own historic pictures.

Reg's passion for trains began at an early age. His father Jack was a Westinghouse Brake Inspector with the railways in Quorn. The first job that Reg had was Junior Clerk in the Quorn Loco Shed. As timekeeper one of his duties was to blow the steam whistle signifying the start and finish of each shift.

When it was likely that the Quorn to Port Augusta railway line was to be torn up for scrap in the 1970s, he mobilized a group of enthusiasts to ensure its preservation. Reg was ultimately elected as Foundation President of the Pichi Richi Railway. He worked tirelessly to build the society and preserve and restore the infrastructure and rolling stock. It is now a premier tourist attraction bringing special delight to many children and visitors to the region.

Reg had immense drive and energy and was well regarded by his colleagues. He was always an optimist and brought many good ideas to fruition. His efforts rallied support to retain many historic items for future generations, including:

- Preservation of the Great Western Bridge
- Preservation of the Seaview Hostel
- Preservation of the Ransome Rapier steam crane
- Preservation of the Coffee Pot locomotive.
- Preservation of the Bagalowie Caves
- Preservation of the Ruthven Mansions in Adelaide
- Preservation of the Frigate HMAS Diamantina in Brisbane

In later years Reg was diagnosed with Prostate cancer and became Secretary to the Prostate Support Awareness Group (Adelaide) for eight years. In this role he actively promoted and edited a newsletter bringing information and hope to many South Australians. Reg was always available to counsel men and their families who were dealing with the pressure of being newly diagnosed with prostate cancer.

Sadly he was overtaken by cancer himself, but always showed a brave and optimistic spirit. Reg was a man of integrity and gave a lifetime of service to the community. He made a real difference to this world.

Reg died peacefully in the Mary Potter Hospice on 27 May 2008. He is survived by his wife Amy with two children Nancy and Ken, their partners Stuart and Marion and grandchildren Matt, Brad, Rachel, Emily and David.

Ken Mayes

