

OPENING OF THE MATT CONROY MEMORIAL POOLAT MARYMEAD CHILDREN'S CENTRENARRABUNDAH, A. C. T.16 NOVEMBER 1968Speech by the Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton

Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Conroy, Ladies and Gentlemen:-

In a very few short moments, I will be opening and naming this Matt Conroy Wading Pool. I am glad to have been asked to do it for two reasons. One is a personal reason; and that is that Matt Conroy and his family lived just across the street from us when we first came to live in Canberra, and were the first neighbours that we ever got to know in Narrabundah.

During the years that we knew each other, I think the friendship between our families and between Matt Conroy and myself grew constantly. Certainly my admiration for him as a man grew constantly. He was all those things which Mr. Graham has said he was.

He was in addition somebody who got happiness out of each day of life and put effort into everything he did, whether it was his work as a public servant, whether it was the time he spent in sporting activities. . . . I think he finished up being a pretty good bowler, but he began as a very good rugby player and as a very good cricketer and as a very good all round sport; whether it was the time he put into those club activities, those sporting activities, the endeavours to attain better academic qualifications in order the better to be able to do his work in the public service, he gave unsparingly and enjoyed each moment of his life. That is the personal reason why I am glad to be here and why I am so glad to have this opportunity of saying something at the opening of the pool dedicated to his memory.

Another reason, of course, and it is perhaps in a sense much the same sort of reason, is that he was a member of the Lions Club which constructed this pool, another indication of service to the community. He belonged to it, I think, for at least four years, and at the time of his death was Vice-President of it. He gave, as in other fields, during those four years, unstinted effort in the civic activities of the Lions.

These are by no means negligible. I cannot, of course, call to mind all the activities in which they engage. This is one example, this pool from which the children who stay for a short or a long time at Marymead will continue to get pleasure.

There is a great long list of other civic activities that the Lions Club has engaged in - the provision of equipment to the Red Cross for Meals on Wheels, the raising of \$55,000 in the branch which first started here, quite irrespective of the individual work which each member of the Lions Club has put in, for the betterment of the community in which they live, for assistance to those who needed assistance in that community, and always with a certain emphasis towards trying to assist the children in the community.

So both because of my own feeling towards him and because of the work he gave to the Club, which has built this pool and has named it after him, I have. . . . I will not say pleasure. . . . I have satisfaction in being able to perform this duty this afternoon and to pay this tribute.

I think there is very little more to say on an occasion such as this. A man's works speak for him. The recognition of his comrades speaks for him. And the pleasure that future generations will get from this and other activities will continue to speak for him and his associates in the Lions Club. And so I open this Pool and name it The Matt Conroy Wading Pool.