

Colin "Tiny" Nelson OAM
Eulogy - Monday 22nd August 2022

Colin "Tiny" Nelson was born on 6th December 1935 at Kings Park. He was the son of Mavis and Lawrence Nelson and brother to Barbara and Elaine.

So why Tiny? Colin's father Lawrence was 160 kgs and was called "Tiny" and the nickname was passed on to Colin. However, the name did fit him.

In 1941 he went to the Goodwood Primary School and then went to Goodwood Tech for 1 year. He played football, soccer, and cricket during those early schooling years.

Tiny was considered a good footballer, but it all came crashing down when he broke his leg in 1947 playing football for Goodwood P/S against Westbourne Park P/S at Westbourne Park Oval. His leg never healed properly, there was little rehabilitation in those days and a promising sporting career was curtailed.

In 1948 - Tiny was 12 years old and the then President of the Goodwood FC – Mr Peter Haynes decided he needed to be involved at the local club doing something. Peter was not only the President but a player, the local butcher, and a sponsor.

In his first year at the club Tiny took on the A grade Team Manager role and so begins his amazing involvement in administration and on field help for the Goodwood and Goodwood Saints Football Clubs for the next 72 years.

In 1949 Tiny starts as an apprentice electrician until he falls through the roof and decides perhaps plumbing is a better and safer option. He quickly works out that being a plumber is not all beers and skittles (no offence Mark Goodman) and he ends up working at McRobertson's Chocolates in Angus Street – Tiny has found his calling!

In 1950 when only 15 years old, Colin makes the mistake of attending the club's AGM and gets nominated onto the committee. Not learning from the errors of his ways, he also attends the SA Amateur Football League AGM in that same year at Hindmarsh Square when Corey Treloar was the President and is elected to the committee. This is where he forms some great friendships – with Allan Statton who was the CEO of the Amateur League for many years and former president Keith Sims.

In 1952 Colin is called up to National service at Woodside – he lasts 10 days when they finally discover he has flat feet.

In 1954 tiny works for Kodak as a 19-year-old going from office boy to Manager of the Wholesale Dpt.

In 1959 he is awarded Life Membership of the Goodwood FC at only 24 years of age.

Somewhere around this time Tiny decides to help out with the local Girls Marching group – we have no idea why or what experience Tiny had in girls marching but it didn't last long – thank goodness for our club.

In the 70's for approx. 8 years Tiny works for Waterman Norris Cigarette Co. distributing cigarettes into Aust.

In the late 70's Tiny goes to work for O'Connor & Sons, and he will work there for the next 19 years until the company goes through the hoop.

In 1978 Colin is instrumental in Goodwood leaving the Amateur League and joining the Glenelg - South competition. The decision is justified in the short term when the A's win the A2 flag against Norwood Union.

In 1984 the A's end up bottom winning just 2 games, the B's are winless and the C's forfeit all games after round 8.

The club is at an all-time low. During this year Colin is in discussions with the St Raphaels FC about a proposed amalgamation - that would ultimately be regarded as one of the most successful amalgamations of two clubs and saved both from extinction.

This is the beginning of the Colin Nelson / Hans Ellenbroek partnership which will steer the club in the first decade of the new club. The friendship that will form between these two great administrators will be everlasting – and will shape the club to be one of the best. How they didn't kill each other though is beyond belief!

In 1986 Tiny takes over as President and in 1987 the club wins its first A grade premiership in Div 3. Not long afterwards the club wins its next premiership playing in the 1990 Div 2 grand final under coach Warren Ploenges and is promoted to Div 1. In 1993 Tiny is once again elected as President.

Colin was on the executive of the Amateur League from 1992 - 1996, State Team Manager and State Timekeeper from 1983 to 1998 and was the clubs delegate for many years. He has made many friends at our headquarters but most notably the ladies: Elaine, Winnie, Kylie, and Glenda.

Tiny has filled many roles at the club from President, Secretary, Treasurer, Football Director, Bar Manager, Trainer, Team Manager, Goal Umpire, Boundary Umpire and even worked in the canteen.

But the role that so many associate Tiny with is as the club's timekeeper. He filled this role for many years – sitting up in the grandstand with his blanket over his legs. When the games were tight many people would call out "Tiny – how long to go?" and he would normally tell them in no uncertain manner where they could go!

From 2008 to 2018, Tiny was the driver of the Saints van, where he would go to every away game and unload the medical equipment, water containers, footballs, jumpers, and water bottles. On the Friday before the match, he collected the jumpers from the dry cleaner and would then sort out the A, B, C and U18 jumpers into their suitcases. He filled out any paperwork required and ensured the match day footballs were pumped and cleaned. On the Monday he took the dirty jumpers to the dry cleaners and then collected everything ready for training on Tuesday night. His trusty sidekick Russell would be there by his side helping his mate out.

During this time, he forms a close bond with Trent Mills and his family as they were to see each other nearly every week from pre-season to the end of the season and seven Div 1 premierships – which Tiny never sees any!

One of his great friendships though was with Barry 'Nugget' Reece – it was a testing relationship at times, as both got frustrated with each other but the love of football and in particular for Tiny the Saints and Nugget – the Power, Kensington CC, SACA, the Australian Test team and the Saints – there was always plenty to talk about. Especially the standard of umpiring at any footy game Nugget had been too. I remember Tiny saying that he doesn't think Nugget has ever seen a good umpire!

But the person who needs a medal the most is Sharon Zacher-Partington. Sharon had to share the committee room with Tiny for so many years. I'm not sure why it was ever called the committee room – we certainly never had a meeting in there and you would be lucky to swing a cat it was that small.

Tiny wasn't the tidiest of administrators and Sharon would make the fatal error of tidying the office up every now and then and suffer the wrath on Tiny's anger when he couldn't find something. I'm sure Sharon will have many stories to tell this afternoon.

I would run the Auskick on a Thursday night in the early days and around 5.15pm it would get dark, and the lights hadn't been turned on. I would march into Tiny's office and ask is he had the lights key – which I knew he always does – and his response every Thursday night was – “Why do you want that for?” He could be very frustrating at times.

It was the same when you asked Tiny for a pen – “Why do you want that for?” To write Tiny??? He would have about 40 pens in his office – 35 of them never worked – poor Sharon!

I would like to regale a couple of stories about Tiny.

Now let's be honest, we all know Tiny could be a negative, grumpy bugger at times. It was Brenton Honor's first year as coach in 1995, it was round 2 and we had a great win, BH walked into the club & Tiny was sitting in his office, and he went into the office to see him & said “How good was that Tiny?” his answer was “I don't bloody know, I wasn't there”, “well where were you then mate?” was BH's reply, he said “I was home, like always, I put the mockers on the team BH, whenever I used to go we'd lose so I stopped going!”, “but times are changing mate, you need to start coming & enjoying us winning”, “no BH I won't be going”, “you're kidding me Tiny, ok I'll find a job for you, I'll see you Tuesday night & we'll have a chat”. So BH gave him a job, he got him to do some forward scouting for him - he would go and watch surreptitiously (In the Goodwood Saints emblazoned van) the team we would be playing the next week & report back. It was more to get him out of the house & get him involved than to help BH. I think BH may have regretted this decision – I've created a monster BH was heard to say! Every Saturday night Tiny would be waiting for BH at the front door inside the club & funnel him into his office & then shut the door, he would then give BH a full analysis of the game which included quarter by quarter scores, goal kickers, stats for key players, positional moves etc. BH said he did a pretty good job, it's just that he didn't need to hear it all as he walked into the club. If the team he was watching won, he would shake his head & say “Ooh BH they are very very good, I don't think we can beat them!” Classic Tiny! BH coached the club for 4 years & he didn't watch us play once so not sure how he would know if we could beat them or not!! Some nights BH would try to sneak past him, but he would find him & order him to report to his office. As BH was a fiery, working night shift, there would be some Saturday nights he would go straight to work – that didn't stop Tiny though - he would always call BH on a Sunday or Monday night to go over his match report.

Probably the best Story of All

Big strong Tommy Betts was going hard at the footy in an away game at Edwardstown Oval in our 97' premiership year when he slammed into the point post snapping the post in two! Post-game Wade Jones was the mastermind behind an idea to steal the broken point post & present it to Tommy back at the club after the best player presentations. Jonesy jumped in his valiant wagon with accomplices Simon Hughes, Paul Cox, Matt Kerin & Nick O'Connell, they strapped the point post to the roof of the car, holding onto it with their hands through the car windows, then drove it back to the club. It was presented to Tommy Betts as planned; it was hilarious! However, once Tiny heard the story, he was not happy about it & demanded it be returned to Edwardstown the next day. I told Tiny the boys will take it back tomorrow, but it never happened as Mark Goodman mounted it on the wall inside the club.

I remember talking to Tiny in the club the week after about the incident & Tiny saying how proud he was that the boys listened to him & took the point post back as he asked! I couldn't keep a straight face as Tiny had his back to the wall where the point post was mounted & I was looking straight at it above his head! Tiny had no idea that it was up there, classic!

In 1997 - he wouldn't even go to the grand final, BH said “Tiny, it's our grand final you need to be there, plus there's no game next week so there's nothing for you to do, you're gunna have to come, “Oh no BH, said Tiny – “I won't be going as we'll definitely lose if I'm there!” However, Tiny did go to the ground, apparently, he was nervously walking up & back behind the grandstands & the Morton Bay figs at Adelaide Oval.

We had won our first ever Division 1 Premiership that year, and BH walked into the club after the game & saw Tiny, Hans Ellenbroek & Lenny Woods in the corner of the bar. He went straight over to them, and all 3 were crying like babies, he gave them all a hug & Tiny said “We all thought we wouldn’t be alive to ever see Goody Saints win a Division 1 flag, thanks so much BH” they all then burst out in tears again!

He is loved by all who have met him, and the club would not be where it is if not for him.

Awards and Recognition

- 1997 The Unley Council awards Tiny a ‘Community Service Award’ for 50 years’ service to the Goodwood Saints Football Club.
- 2002 – 2004 The SAAFL U/17 Best and Fairest medal is named the ‘Colin Nelson Medal’
- 2003 Metro South Junior Football League awards Tiny the President’s Award for outstanding service to Junior Football.
- 2004 The AFL recognises Tiny’s service to football with a certificate of thanks.
- 2005 Tiny and Hans Ellenbroek are the inaugural inductees into the Goodwood Saints Legends for outstanding dedication and service to the club.
- 2009 The greatest recognition for Colin is when he is awarded The Medal of the Order of Australia for service to AFL football and the development of juniors at the Goodwood Saints Football Club.
- 2014 The City of Unley and both the Goodwood Saints Football and Goodwood Cricket Club’s name the grandstand – ‘The Colin ‘Tiny’ Nelson OAM Stand’ in his honour.

He is one in a million and in 2018 he officially retired at the age of 83 from volunteering at the club due to ill health.

When Tiny is placed into the hearse today, he will be taken for a lap of honour around the block of the oval and we will sound the siren one last time which will mark the end of his time at the Goodwood Saints Football Club and the beginning of his legacy.

Thank you.

Craig Scott
President
Goodwood Saints Football Club

