

Hello Everyone,

On behalf of my Dad, thank you for coming today.

It is a major pity that funerals, wakes, and eulogies are never heard by the person who is the focal point. Dad would have been tickled pink and really chuffed by all this attention, but at the same really embarrassed and humbled.

Thank you.

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I'm Ross, Lindsay and Hilary's youngest son and very regrettably, their only surviving son. At times like this, I do miss my brothers, but I am so grateful for all the support everyone has given.

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Lindsay Rutherford Stewart, a Southlander all of his life, was born, curiously, in Ngaruawahia on 22 February 1917, just over 93 years ago.

His father William had emigrated as a teenager in 1888 with his parents, William and Jeannie, from their home at the Mill of Balrownie near Brechin in Scotland (which is about halfway up the east coast between Edinburgh and Aberdeen).

His mother Lilian was a McKenzie whose family had emigrated also from Scotland in 1859, and most of her early life was spent in Pukerau and Dunedin.

Dad's father William trained as a chemist in Dunedin, and whilst there, met and married Lilian in 1913. They moved back to Invercargill, producing 2 lusty lads, Murray and Ronnie, but then, and we don't know why, moved to Ngaruawahia in 1916 where William, my Granddad, had a chemist shop..

Dad was born there, but remained a Southland supporter all his life and never Waikato! The family moved back to Invercargill, to Herbert Street, in 1919 and subsequently their 4th son, Alan, and their only daughter, Betty, were born in Invercargill.

Dad, Lindsay, went to Waihopai Primary and then on to Southland Boys.

Stewart's Pharmacy was on the corner of Dee and Don Streets, opposite a bookshop named Hyndman's, and a young teenaged lass named Hilary Hyndman soon caught the eye of the young Lindsay Stewart across Dee Street, and romance, as they say, flourished.

They were together for almost 75 years.

The teenage Lindsay flourished, at school, at play and away in the mountains.

Both the Stewart and Hyndman families had holiday homes in Queenstown from the 1920s, and Lindsay and Murray developed a love for the mountains.

Lindsay's first recorded exploration was a trip with Ralph Wesley from Queenstown to Moke Lake to Moonlight, Arthurs Point and back to Queenstown. Aged 11.

Two years later at 13, he set off on a 3-day 2-night excursion with three other lads, from Arthurs Point, to Moonlight, then to Skippers, along behind Coronet to Macetown, and then out to Arrowtown. Me, I'm more realistic!

His climbing exploits never looked back, as many of you may know. Virgin peaks in New Zealand and in Peru, and up to the top of Aspiring in 1981, aged 64, with the Brough brothers.

But more of that later. At Southland Boys, he set a pace which my brothers and I had some difficulty emulating. In his last year in 1934, he was a member of the 1st XV (a prop, and hence his broken nose, more than once), a gymnastics champion although not as good as his brother Ronnie, became a prefect, was awarded a Junior National Scholarship and was made Dux.

Off to Dunedin to medical school, staying at Knox College, he graduated as a doctor in 1940.

Marrying his childhood sweetheart Hilary at the end of 1940, they set up home in Doon Street, Invercargill. Dad was forever sensitive about the fact that despite attempting to enlist for war duties 3 times, the last time actually boarding the troop train to go off to camp, he was each time ordered to remain as a doctor in Invercargill, an essential service for those remaining behind. His eldest brother Murray, a radiologist, had joined the Royal Navy and his younger brother Alan joined the RAF as a Wellington bomber pilot but regrettably Alan and his crew never returned from a mission out of Malta in 1943 when he was only 22.

For the next 37 years, from 1940 to his retirement in 1977, he was a house surgeon at Kew, visiting surgeon at Kew and Park Hospitals and above all a respected GP in Invercargill.

So many people have come forward with stories about his kindnesses in the middle of the night, in pyjamas if need be, it is very humbling.

Briefly back to the climbing.

Through the 1930s and early 1940s, Lindsay and several mates climbed extensively in the Darrans, the mountain area just before and to the north of the Homer Tunnel in Fiordland. Bear in mind he had made his first solo climb, of the Remarkables, at just 15. No Playstations back then.

In those days, those who climbed peaks first were generally able to name them, and he did so (Revelation, Taiaroa, and others come to mind) but none were named after him; he didn't consider that was appropriate. However, two features in Fiordland do bear his name: Lindsay's Ledges (sloping rock ledges, leading up beside Karetai from Lake Turner) and the Lindsay Stewart Buttress on Crosscut.

His climbing continued through into the 1960s in Fiordland and also in the Mt Cook area, with both Richard and Donald, my brothers. Richard and Dad completed the first ever father-son grand traverse of all 3 peaks of Mt Cook in 1961, while Donald and Dad made a first ascent up the west ridge of Crosscut a couple of years later.

Around this time, a group of enthusiastic Southland climbers thought it would be a jolly good idea to set off to climb a spectacular virgin peak in the Andes in South America named Nevado Cayesh, and needing a climber with medical experience, just in case, Dad was firmly in the spotlight. He readily agreed, although I suspect Mum was not as happy as he.....

It is as well to point out that all through this period, Hilary was the strong supporter behind the scenes, bringing up the children, managing the house, acting as unpaid receptionist and nurse all of the hours which God made, and this allowed Dad some freedom to indulge his climbing passion.

I gather that the bargaining for the Andes trip was something along the lines of – well if you are going climbing for 3 months, you can take me on an overseas trip straight afterwards!

Thus in April 1960, Dad and 5 others arrived in Peru and, cutting a long story short, reached the summit of the virgin Nevado Cayesh in July. For the hell of it, so it seems, another challenge loomed, resulting in Lynn Crawford and Dad getting to within 500 ft of the summit of Huascarán, sheltering overnight in the open at 21,000 ft without oxygen before retreating, complete with frost-bitten toes, of which he lost 3! This had a side benefit in later years as a podiatrist called to cut his toenails only charged him 70% of the normal fee!

From Peru, my folks spent time in South America and then to the USA to meet Hilary's relatives. This was the first of several overseas trips they enjoyed together over the years, to all parts of the globe – a fact that his grandchildren found fascinating and who tried to go to places than Lindsay had not been.

His external activities included being President of the NZ Alpine Club for two years in the mid 1950s, and then for 33 years he was a member of the Fiordland National Park

Board and its successor the NZ National Parks Authority (before DoC was created and took over all such functions).

As Chairman of the Southland Mountain Safety Council, in 1970 he was asked, and readily accepted, an invitation to travel with a group to the Antarctic to teach Kiwis and Americans about snow safety and how to extricate themselves from sticky situations down crevasses!

In the 1970s, Mum and Dad moved from 70 Doon Street next door to a Lockwood on Miss Bricknell's section at 62 Doon Street, and then in 1977, retired officially to their crib in Queenstown, whilst spending time as a locum in Lumsden, Gore and Motueka.

A whole new life opened up for them in Queenstown, although they were hardly newcomers, having built their home at 5 Hallenstein Street in the 1950s.

Mum's eyesight had gotten steadily worse through the 1980s, a source of much frustration for her, although most times you would swear she could see exactly what you were doing. Some women.....

So as well as becoming very involved with the Queenstown Bowling Club and the Wakatipu Senior Citizens group, the two of them acted as unpaid coordinators for the NZ Foundation of the Blind, arranging for the collection and repair of vital talking book machines.

By 2003, Mum's health had deteriorated to such an extent that Dad was unable to care for her to the level he wished, and the very difficult decision was made for Mum to enter the Rest Home and Hospital at Frankton, where she died in mid 2005.

This was the latest in a long series of tragic events for them – Lindsay's brother Ronnie's death in 1935, brother Alan missing in action in 1943, but worst of all, the deaths of their two sons, Donald on Mt Erebus in 1979 and Richard from the dreadful motor neurone disease in 1991.

Both sons had been very successful in their respective fields of law and medicine, and they left young families – all of whom are here today.

Soon after Mum's death, Lindsay moved into the rest home at Frankton, where he stayed for just over 2 years, before the need to relocate into the hospital next door at the end of 2007.

I do want to especially thank the nurses who have cared for him during this time and consider them to be part of our extended family.

Thank you.

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Oh, and by the way, Murray's daughter, my cousin Tina who lives in England, is unable to be here, but she arranged for a bottle of special Scotch, a very favourite tippie of Dad's, to be delivered to us.

She asked that I toast Dad on her behalf.

It is my honour to do so:

"Dad, all of us will miss you, your family, your friends, your colleagues and all who have met you, near and far, all of us. The world is a better place for your having been here, and a sadder place for your passing.

Lang may your lum reek.

And I hope you are having a great time back together with Mum.
I'm so glad you were my Dad."

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