

**THE AUSTRALIAN CLUB, SYDNEY
REUNION***
Michael Kirby**
FORTY-FIVE YEARS ON

Excerpts:

“The overheated library was somewhere there, as was Mrs Gaunson in charge of law school notes. So valuable were these that Mrs Gaunson had her terrier dog Sally always by her side to protect the notes from marauding law students. One Law Lord declared to an Australian Legal Convention in our youth that it normally took lawyers twenty years or so to graduate from their law school notes into new thought about legal doctrine. You can take it from me that, viewed from where I sit, more decades have to be added to this diagnosis. Indeed, many lawyers, and even a few judges, never truly move from the law as it was taught to them in their law school days. In so far as they learn anything new, they generally denounce it and sincerely doubt its truth.”

“I asked the winning team for the secret of their success. They thought about it and then said that they believed it was a willingness on the part of individual members ultimately to sink their own egos and to work closely together for the common cause. They cooperated as a team. ***They shared the burdens.*** They thought of each other and supported each other.”

“As I heard this explanation of the winning Jessup mooter's formula, I remembered a talk given a decade ago by the Hon Tom Uren AO, a past federal Minister and one-time prisoner in the Changi War Prison in Singapore. Tom Uren declared that the reason why so many Australian soldiers survived the ordeal of Changi, when their British, Dutch, French and other counterparts perished, was that they shared everything amongst each other. It did not matter who was an officer and who other ranks. ***Sharing was the feature that got them through.***”

“I hope that in Australia, despite the modern tendency towards economic rationalism and selfishness, that we will keep alight this special feature of our country. In a sense, ***the reason why we, a group whose lives has taken us on many different courses, come together is because we shared an intense experience in our youth.*** We have not forgotten that experience. Despite the passage of time, we too are still bonded by it and by the foundations that it provided for the lives of all of us.”

“working with, Julius Stone that I remember most vividly. It was "Big Julie", as we irreverently called him, who taught us lessons that ran counter to the professional orthodoxy of the time. That law contained many categories of indeterminate reference. That law inescapably reflects and expresses values. That judges have choices and reach their dispositions influenced by such choices. That the choices should be transparent and principled. These were great lessons for law and for life.”

“As we have become older, we have accumulated a little wisdom.
We are wise enough to know that office and professional success may be important. But that the greatest success in life lies in personal things - in children and grandchildren if we have them. In close relationships and love.”



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