



PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION

# PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS' MEMBER NEWSLETTER

MAY 2021 EDITION

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



- ROD GRINTER

Welcome to our third newsletter for 2021. At the time of writing this, our team is sitting on top

of the ladder with eight wins and zero losses. We should all be able to dream, as the excitement of what's happening on the field brings back some great memories. Some special times that I remember are:

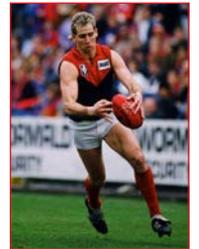
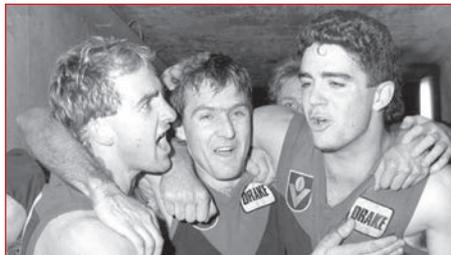
**1987** - making the finals for the first time since 1964 (last premiership) and the first time the great Robbie Flower played finals in his career.

**1988** - making the Grand Final, beating the Eagles in the Elimination Final, beating the Pies in the Semi Final and beating Carlton in the Preliminary Final.

**1990** - Equal best home and away year with 16 wins from 22 games - we sat at the top of the ladder after nine rounds.

We are the custodians of the MFC Past and Present Players' and Officials' Association. With this come ups and downs, disappointment, grief and joy. That is why it is so important that everyone gets on board the Dare To Dream Train. Enjoy and support the club and the team while having fun in 2021, because as we all know too well it's a tough and ruthless competition.

A major part of what we endeavour to do is about creating togetherness and connection. In Rd Eight, at our second Family & Friends Match Day function vs the Swans, we had record numbers attend, with Guy Rigoni doing an outstanding job as MC. He was assisted superbly by Stephen Powell interviewing past Swans and Demons player, Wayne Henwood, along with



our very own Alistair Nicholson, who has recently taken up the post of CEO of the AFL Coaches Association [and who features in the triple 'Where Are They Now' item in this newsletter]. Thank you to all who attended and participated.

To stay in touch, keep an eye on our website, emails and Instagram, and please pass on this newsletter to ensure constant communication reaches all members.

Once again, a big thank you goes to all those who have contributed to our monthly newsletters.

As always, stay safe and healthy.

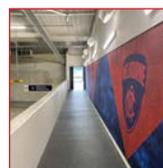
*Regards and Go Dees*

**Rod Grinter**  
President  
MFC P&PP&OA



## AROUND THE GROUND

Match days and match day functions at the MCG have been special this year, with over 200 people in attendance for Rounds One and Eight. Along the way, Association members have both been part of and collected some memorable images. Here's some to enjoy from Round Two onwards, with familiar faces and places popping up...and don't forget to check our **Instagram @mfcpastplayers** when you get the chance.





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# MEMBER NEWSLETTER



## MATCH DAY SPONSORSHIP

A welcome initiative for our next MCG match day function - round to be announced, subject to AFL scheduling - is:

### MATCH DAY SPONSORSHIP

For an investment of \$1000, you will receive a range of benefits, including:

**Four tickets to match day function, including premium reserved seating**

**Acknowledgement in MFC P&PP&OA President's welcome address at match day function**

**Interview with MC at match day function to promote your business to guests**

**Networking opportunities with Association members and guests at match day function**

**Opportunity to distribute business**

**information/brochures/giveaways etc at match day function**

To discuss further, please contact any of those named below:

John Ahern – 0413 594 422  
– [john@dndc.com.au](mailto:john@dndc.com.au)

Rod Grinter – 0419 497 906  
– [rod.grinter@ridley.com.au](mailto:rod.grinter@ridley.com.au)

Paul Hopgood – 0412 829 071  
– [paul@hopgoodconsulting.com.au](mailto:paul@hopgoodconsulting.com.au)

## THE REV

While many members will have read of 'The Rev' Paul Burnham being recognised with MFC P&PP&OA Life Membership at the Association's March AGM, the presentation of his certificate took place at the late April committee meeting, with Vice President John Ahern doing the honours. The occasion was greatly appreciated by The Rev, who afterwards said that:

**The certificate is now in my study area at home. I am so proud to be associated with such a great club. It's really humbling, getting recognition from peers and friends, and holds a lot of weight along the journey.**

In recognition of so many who have made a huge contribution to the Association over the years, we present the list of all Life Members, with Paul Burnham the most recent addition to the company:



W. J. Adams\*  
H.L. McPherson\*  
A.J. Bullock\*  
A. Mollison  
E.A. Cliffe\*  
G.B. Payne  
F.V. Hughes\*  
N.W. Smith\*  
J.F. Lord  
F.I. Williams\*

A.F. La Fontaine\*  
K.G. McKaige\*  
C.S. Bradley\*  
E.L. Meade\*  
Sir A.E. Chadwick\*  
G.A. O'Keefe\*  
M.P. Gibb\*  
J.D. Rogers  
K.V. Jones  
R.L. Wartman\*

J.M. King\*  
C.W. Harris  
G.F. Bickford\*  
E.J. Massey\*  
E.J. Carroll  
R.A. Mollison\*  
B.J. Dixon

G.N. Pearce  
G.L. Jones\*  
H.J. Steel\*  
R.L. Kennedy\*  
S.L. Wittman\*  
**P.B. Burnham**

(\* Deceased)

## POSITIVE PASTORAL CARE – PAUL 'THE REV' BURNHAM

To continue with a good theme, let's review some of the statistics achieved by The Rev throughout April and most of May. In his 'match report', we heard of eight hours of calls over six weeks, with 133 contacts. Most of these were actual conversations – checking in, catching up, sharing stories, just listening – with a few text messages thrown in for good measure.

Of course, it's not all about the stats,

and in his role, The Rev is always interested in caring for the individual and helping them to stay connected as well. Some of those who he mentioned in further updates included 'Frank Rugolo, on the Mornington Peninsula...Robbie Sayers, recovering from surgery...Dan Rogers [mentioned above], recovering well...' There are serious times, and shared stories, and The Rev is there to care at all times.

It must be acknowledged that it takes a dedicated effort from many to help out, and contact details can occasionally slide off the edge. Thanks are always due to those who have helped The Rev with keeping his contact notebook (all texta and highlighted – an impressive document) up to date and flourishing, with special mention this time round going to Sophie Galer for her tracing efforts.

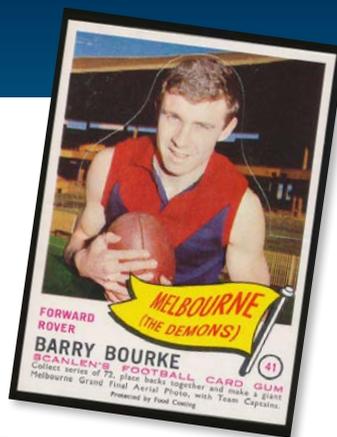
## SPONSORSHIP - WELCOME, BARRY BOURKE!

As you may have noticed in recent times, the MFC P&PP&OA has a new sponsor. Well known to all around the Melbourne Football Club, Barry Bourke has come on board in Season 2021 to sponsor the Association. The Barry Bourke Motors logo is steadily making its way onto our communications, and we thank Barry for being a huge supporter of the MFC P&PP&OA and its activities.

Barry Bourke Motors can be found at [barrybourke.com.au](http://barrybourke.com.au), and Association

members are welcome to contact Barry on 0418 999 101 for assistance with all their motoring needs.

Barry Bourke is an integral part of MFC heritage, having played 175 games in the red and blue – wearing No. 14 throughout – between 1963 and 1973, including the 1964 premiership win.



At the same time, we thank our long term sponsor, Dan Rogers, whose business – Rogers & Company Foods – has been a mainstay of the Association over many seasons. Dan, who is currently recovering from a stroke, is a Life Member of the MFC P&PP&OA, and a valued contributor. All members will be pleased to know that he is going well with his recuperation, and enjoying the season to date. We all wish Dan and his family well, and look forward to seeing him again in the near future.



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## BENEVOLENT FUND 2021

Throughout the past year, contributions to the Association's Benevolent Fund via our GoFundMe page have provided an invaluable source of assistance and helping to build for the future. The generosity of so many has meant that your Association has a solid foundation to support members of our community in need.

We are continuing the campaign in 2021! Our contributors to date are:

- **Deluxe Print**
- **Paul Galway**
- **Kaye Hargreaves**

If you would like to join the list

**DONATE NOW**

Or go to: [gofundme](https://www.gofundme.com)  
[gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com) and search **MFC P&PP&OA**

We look forward to welcoming all contributors, and sharing some of their stories with you.

## BIG FREEZE 7

As we head towards the annual Melbourne vs Collingwood Queen's Birthday blockbuster on Monday 14 June, there's another eagerly awaited event on the horizon:

### BIG FREEZE 7

On this day, we get to turn the MCG red and blue – and BLUE – as the much loved Fight MND beanies take over the arena, and another group of daredevils descend into the ice bath.

The motto this year – and always – is 'Play On', central to Neale Daniher's determination and dedication to fighting 'The Beast'.

Visit <https://fightmnd.org.au> to buy your beanie, donate, and view the full range of events and merchandise.



## LOOKING FOR.....

As noted, sometimes we lose contact with past players and officials. If anyone can assist with providing details or encouraging the following to contact us to update their information, it would be greatly appreciated. In the first instance, please contact **Spike Harris – 0411 235 073** or [spike.w.harris@gmail.com](mailto:spike.w.harris@gmail.com) to pass on any details or leads.

Also, don't hesitate to refer to earlier editions of our newsletters. While we try to refresh the lists of 'Looking For' in order to track down as many people as possible, often those who are missing in action stay that way for quite some time. We sincerely appreciate all assistance given.

**Paul Granieri**  
**John Howat**  
**Ricky Jackson**  
**Liam Jurrah**

**Matthew Mahoney**  
**Len Mann**  
**Bernie Massey**  
**Austin Wonaeamirri**





## AROUND THE MCG

As everyone knows, we all missed a lot of time at the MCG in 2020 – games, match day functions and the annual reunion, just to name a few occasions. However, we are all making up for it in 2021, with six of nine wins (at time of compiling) at our home ground.

Even when Melbourne games aren't being played at the MCG, there is a strong MFC presence throughout the arena and surrounding Yarra Park, where the names remind us of the impact that our club has had – and continues to have – on the game and the ground alike.

So, if you haven't seen the following, make time to visit:

Statues honouring Jim Stynes, Norm Smith and Ron Barassi, which can all be seen throughout Yarra Park.

The Jim Stynes Grill, Ron Barassi Room, Percy Beames Bar, Frank Grey Smith Bar (Grey Smith was a pioneering Melbourne player, as well as MCC President) and the Harrison or Wills Rooms (two of those hailed for their role in the early days of the game).

Don't forget to look up at the Robert Flower Wing as you take your



seat, and if you get the chance, visit either the Robert Flower or David Neitz Terraces, with stunning views of the city as a highlight. While you're looking out beyond the ground, take note of a recent and very special addition to the Melbourne collection, with Danier's Way leading over the William Barak Bridge and into the city.

Once you've made it back to the ground, you might make your way into the MCC Members' Stand via the Cordner Entrance at Gate 2, paying tribute to an exceptional family, with particular reference to Dr Donald Cordner, one time MCC President, MFC premiership captain and 1946 Brownlow Medallist.

As you can see, the red and blue reminders are scattered throughout, from player photos to a huge replica of the original rules. In areas such as the Anniversary Gallery, running in between the Members Dining Room and the Long Room, the bronze doors and the giant tapestry have significant MFC representation, with the likes of Robert Flower and Ivor Warne-Smith portrayed.



Then, of course, turn your attention to the game that's going on – for that is where the next generation of Melbourne moments is being made.



## SEASONS PAST

As you can read in Rod Grinter's report, the run of Melbourne wins to start this season was memorable, continuing to nine in a row before the narrowest of losses to the Crows in Round Ten. This achievement has put the team of 2021 in elite company. Some of the statistics and seasons mentioned along the way include:

**1956** – Norm Smith was coach, Noel McMahan was captain, and this was the back-to-back companion premierships win for 1955, with the hat-trick waiting to be fulfilled in 1957. The team didn't play on the MCG until Round Five, and went on to lose just two games for the entire season, before a triumphant finals series and victory over Collingwood. The Melbourne premiership side of 1956 became known as the 'Olympic Premiers', and in 2004 the team was inducted into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame. The winning streak in this season was thirteen games to start 1956. When added to the six that had taken the team through to the 1955 premiership win, the run extends to nineteen. In fact, 1955 started with ten straight wins, meaning that Melbourne supporters were spoilt for favourite game choice.



**1965** – this was a different and disturbing time for the Melbourne Football Club. Regardless, the team won eight games in a row to start the season, before the sacking of coach Norm Smith after conflict with the Committee saw Melbourne miss the finals for the first time since 1953. It was an era of great change and increasing professionalism in the game, with Richmond becoming co-tenants at the MCG. 1965 was also the first season without Ron Barassi's presence after six premierships, as he headed to captain-coach at Carlton.

**1990** - In the first year of the AFL, Melbourne recorded 16 wins – its equal best achievement in a home and away season. However, it must be noted that the Demons played 22 rounds in 1990, as opposed to 1956 when they won 16 of 18 rounds.

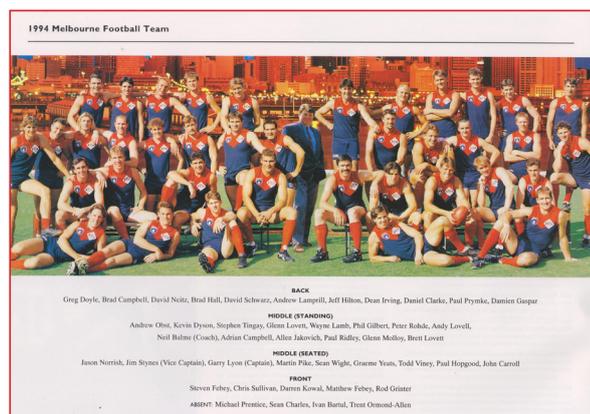
Starting the season with a flourish and five straight wins (before a narrow loss at the SCG, followed by another two wins back at the MCG), Melbourne sat at the top of the ladder after nine rounds, ahead of West Coast by percentage. It took Hawthorn to stop the momentum with a 44-point win, only soured by a skull fracture to Jason Dunstall when he slid into Earl Spalding's knee.

For the fourth season in succession, Melbourne made the finals. After defeating Hawthorn in the final home and away round, Melbourne again beat the Hawks, by nine points in the Elimination Final at the MCG. Defenders Tony Campbell and Peter Rohde were pivotal in both weeks, keeping Dunstall and Brereton in check. The Demons were then knocked out of the finals by West Coast, an unfortunate turnaround after winning convincingly at Subiaco in Round 20. The Eagles defeated Melbourne by 30 points in the first semi-final at Waverley Park – the first finals victory by an interstate team.

Garry Lyon won the club's Best and

Fairest, and Darren Bennett kicked 87 goals to top the club's goalkicking – the best effort since Fred Fanning's 97 goals in 1947. Melbourne won the McClelland Trophy for the first time since 1958, attaining the highest aggregate between seniors, reserves and under 19s. Rod Keogh won the first of two Gardiner Medals, while future 2016 Western Bulldogs premierships coach Luke Beveridge came second.

**1994** - Melbourne produced its most successful season under Neil Balme in 1994, with the team regarded as one of Melbourne's best since its most recent premierships win in 1964. As with 1990, the Demons started the 1994 season with five straight wins, ultimately finishing the home and away season with twelve wins. This took them to seventh in the new final eight.



Melbourne upset Carlton in the third qualifying final by 27 points at the MCG to open their finals campaign. The Demons then smashed Footscray by 79 points in the first semi-final, also played at the MCG.

Garry Lyon booted 10 goals in a stunning display, and David Schwarz had a brilliant finals series. Melbourne played its first non-Victorian final against West Coast Eagles in the second preliminary final at the WACA. Despite possessing an impressive line-up, Melbourne was no match for the dominant West Coast, as the home side won by 65 points. The Eagles went on to win the flag by 80 points against Geelong.



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# MEMBER NEWSLETTER

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

### NO. 8 – ALISTAIR NICHOLSON

In this issue of the newsletter, we are pleased to be able to bring you a triple treat of 'Where Are They Now?', taking in guernsey No. 8, 9 and 10.

Originally from Western Australia, Alistair Nicholson – along with wife Julia and children Olivia (14), Sam (12) and Josh (9) – could not be more entrenched in Melbourne and its sporting culture if he tried. Having recently departed his role as CEO of the Australian Cricketers' Association, he is now in charge of the AFL Coaches Association.



It has been an intense six years for the former No. 8, who played 110 games in red and blue between 1997 and 2005 (initially wearing No. 44 before moving to 8 in 2001). His efforts were particularly highlighted by achieving a hard-won revenue sharing model of player payments for male and female cricket players alike; a significant challenge in a tumultuous environment. Having represented Australia's cricketers up to and through 2020's COVID-19 challenges, Alistair, realising that it was 'eighteen months to the next MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) agreement', had to decide whether it was 'time to go, or time to stay.' Eighteen months meant either becoming fully absorbed, or stepping away. Then the stars aligned, with Mark Brayshaw departing the AFL Coaches Association. It was time to leave cricket.

The new role means that Alistair again

has a different perspective on AFL – 'when I was working at cricket, I liked being able to click into another sport.' Regardless of where he's at, though, he's always been dedicated to keeping in touch with what is happening

at Melbourne, and his three children are also all committed Demons. 'Their hearts beat true!', says Alistair. Son Sam has been playing footy at Under 13s level, but as yet, a variety of sports occupy the three junior Nicholsons.

As he observes from the sidelines, there is no doubt that Alistair's own heart is still completely red and blue, as he takes a strong interest in this generation of backline players, revels in the early season achievements of 2021, and remembers his own time in the game, saying:

*We made a run in 2000 – the back end of the season was the run. It's a marathon, and it has its ups and downs. What they do know this season is that they can play really strong footy. It does take five to six years in the system – week in, week out – to establish yourself, and that's where players like Petracca and Oliver are at. There's no substitute for experience.*

Fittingly, Alistair also observes of coach Simon Goodwin that 'he has a good rapport with the players, but that doesn't surprise me. He's a great players' man.' Chances are that Alistair will get quite a few chances to see both the team and the coach in action, from Alice Springs to the MCG, in tandem with his new role. Meanwhile, his last words are those of someone who's seen the game from both side of the boundary line, in good times and bad alike. 'Let's keep the faith.'

### NO. 9 – DAVID NEITZ

Like he was when he played, David Neitz remains a constant presence; and while he may not be in the No. 9 guernsey any longer, his involvement is at the heart of the Melbourne Football Club, as it has been since the early 1990s.

Living in Elwood, David and partner Kelly have two young daughters – Edie and Cleo. Away from home, David is at the helm of a craft beer company that he 'started a few years ago with a couple of mates; one of those is Paul Hopgood, who is also involved.' It's called Brewmanity Beer Company, and 'if anyone's going to Dan Murphy's or an IGA, feel free to grab a Social Beast – it's probably the easiest one to find!'

Brewmanity originally started when 'Neale [Daniher] decided he was going to do some fundraising for Fight MND. We were obviously into beer – both the drinking and the making of – so we decided to make a beer, put it out there, and see if



## WHERE ARE THEY NOW? *continued*

we could put it into a few pubs and raise a few dollars. We did – we raised about \$50,000...we've raised about \$250,000 for the cause. Now it's turned into our actual business.' But wait, there's more. 'We will have the Brewmanity Brewery, in the not too distant future, in South Melbourne. So – keep your eyes peeled for that!' Once again, Paul Hopgood is involved in the venture, maintaining the teamwork that has led to the success of Brewmanity.

David still 'tries to get to the footy when the Demons are playing here in Melbourne – I like to come along and check it out.' Of course, one of the most special occasions in recent times was for the presentation of Nathan Jones' 300th game guernsey on Anzac Eve, and it's such moments that highlight the importance of the involvement of the likes of David Neitz. His name is ever present, and not only in the record books.

As well as the always popular David Neitz Terrace at the MCG, there is Melbourne's David Neitz Academy – originally initiated by Todd Viney – enabling the former captain to share 'some DNA' when he has a chat to the first to third year players each season, imparting the values of the club's football department. It's a clever play on words, but it also shows that the legacy of David Neitz – 306 games, 631 goals and with a plethora of honours to his name – lives on through succeeding generations.



### NO. 10 – MARCUS SEECAMP

Far from the MCG, Melbourne's former No. 10 between 1995 and 2000 (89 games, following 51 with Fitzroy between 1992 and 1994) is living a life of community service and involvement in Geelong.

Marcus Seecamp is currently undertaking his final year of a Graduate Diploma of Psychology (Advanced), with the ultimate intention of studying for a Masters of Psychology. 'It's been seven to eight years of study – I enjoy studying.'

Working in disability and mental health services in both Geelong and Ballarat, and having been in the industry for fifteen years, Marcus has hopes of – one day – putting his experience and training into practice in conjunction with the AFL. 'I had a good experience in the AFL – I feel I could make a difference.'

Now, however, it's time for him to keep putting together his research proposal and being involved in sporting activities with his wife Caroline and three sons. 'Keegan is 23, and he's studying Commerce – he's

played local footy with St Joseph's. Jonas has spent a bit of time in the Geelong Falcons' squad and plays locally with Newtown. Jude is thirteen and is considering his options – he's dabbled a bit in basketball.'

Needless to say, the Seecamp household is a busy one. Despite this, Marcus has maintained an involvement in football over the years – from coaching to umpiring – and enjoys the ongoing community involvement.

With his work often proving intensive and challenging, Marcus welcomes the chance to get to Melbourne games whenever possible. 'I get to as many games as I can, and when I do go, I have a great time. It's really exciting this season, and it's good to see us at the right end of the table.'

There, of course, speaks the voice of many Melbourne people, and Marcus has fond memories of the seasons spent and the people met from his time in red and blue, saying:

*I really appreciate the Melbourne Football Club – so many wonderful people – and I really appreciate the past players and people like Jackie and Rod and Spike, who keep it all together. I had a lot of respect for my coaches – Neil Balme, Neale Daniher, Hutchy and Fages – a good group of people. I still have strong relationships from that time, and I remember it very fondly.*

Meanwhile, it's time to study, with writing taking place when it's quiet, usually late at night. 'It takes me a week to get over an assignment!' Plans for his thesis are also churning, with the potential topic encompassing post-traumatic growth after COVID. Exams are always looming, and it's here that the amusing conjunction between worlds often takes place for Marcus. 'There are kids in their 20s – and then there's me. I sometimes get the odd person who remembers me from footy, too.'

**Thank you to Alistair, David and Marcus for sharing their time and stories. We look forward to bringing more 'Where Are They Now?' stories to you in future issues.**



# NATHAN JONES – 300 GAMES

On 24 April, Melbourne defeated Richmond in what is always a memorable encounter, filled with ceremony to mark Anzac Eve. It was even more special in 2021, with Nathan Jones becoming one of a select band of players – and only two at Melbourne, joining David Neitz (306) – to reach the triple tonne.



We congratulate Nathan on his magnificent achievements, and recognise a number of other Melbourne milestones that have been achieved so far in Season 2021:

- Round One vs Fremantle – Clayton Oliver (100 games)
- Round One vs Fremantle – James Jordon (AFL senior debut)
- Round Two vs St Kilda – Steven May (150 career games)
- Round Six vs Richmond (Anzac Eve) – Angus Brayshaw (100 games)
- Round Seven vs North Melbourne – Ben Brown (MFC debut)
- Round Eight vs Sydney – Jake Lever (100 career games)



*I think it's fantastic – he's such a heart and soul player of the Melbourne Football Club. He's had opportunities where he could have gone and chased his own personal success, but he chose to stay, and guide the club into a new era, which is what he's achieved. Hopefully there's a lot more for him still to achieve! It's great that he's been able to earn his way into the 300 Club.*

David Neitz

# VALE - DICK FENTON-SMITH

All involved with the Melbourne Football Club and the Melbourne Football Club Past and Present Players' and Officials' Association were saddened to hear of the recent death of Dick Fenton-Smith.

From Ormond Amateurs, Fenton-Smith packed a great deal into three seasons – 1957 to 1959 – including two premierships, in 1957 and 1959. Wearing No. 1 throughout his career, Fenton-Smith 'gained selection on the MFC final training list in 1957 at the age of 25, after several years of trying...'

Being used in a variety of positions,



Dick Fenton-Smith, third row down, sixth in.

from ruck to defence, Fenton-Smith was hailed for his speed, coupled with 'great mobility'. He played his 50th game in the 1959 premiership win, after which he retired, later going on to play with Sturt (SA).

Fenton-Smith holds another rare honour, having represented the VAFA in the 1956 Olympics demonstration

game against a combined VFL/VFA team. The VAFA won by 26 points, with Fenton-Smith kicking four goals as joint leading goal kicker for the winners.

Following his playing career, Fenton-Smith also served on Melbourne's committee, and in later years, was named as a 'Hero' of the club for its 150th celebrations in 2008.

All will long remember Dick Fenton-Smith's contribution to the Melbourne Football Club and the wider game, and we offer our most sincere condolences to his family and friends.

*Dick's son, Richard, spoke to Association chaplain, Paul 'The Rev' Burnham, saying 'It's been a bit of a struggle at times – we're all very tired, but working through it, and we're very grateful to the Association and the club.'*

