

Eulogy presented by Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP, City of Cockburn on the occasion of the Funeral Service/Mass for the late Mr Donald Francis de San Miguel, OAM, JP and Freeman on Tuesday 26 June 2018 at the Our Lady of Mt Carmel Catholic Church, 82 Collick Street, Hilton 6163.

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Good morning ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys.

The flags at the City of Cockburn are being flown at half-mast today in respect of Donald Francis de San Miguel OAM, JP and Freeman.

Pioneers of the Cockburn District who pass away are afforded this symbolic gesture in recognition of their longevity status as a resident of Cockburn, their contribution to making Cockburn a better place to live for one and all; and further in Don's case his significant impact on local government in Cockburn, the South West Metropolitan Region and within the State of Western Australia.

The City's Pioneers Luncheon held in the lead up to WA Day each year is an amazing event that brings together pioneers of the District to rekindle friendships, continue to share their stories and importantly to enjoy each other's company.

Don only ever missed two Pioneers Luncheons including this years' event held on Friday, 1 June.

June telephoned me to say Don was very ill and didn't have the strength to attend the event. Even then I could hear his voice in the background saying he wanted to speak to the mayor.

Don apologised profusely stating he just couldn't get out of bed, he had tried and reluctantly asked June to call me so he could give his personal apology.

Such was the man that almost nothing stopped him doing what he had set out to do.

The Pioneers luncheon brought friends who had shared the good and bad for over half a century together for they had seen the District transformed from one of market gardens, flower gardens, vineyards, orchards, piggeries, dairies, abattoirs and the like to thriving residential estates, retail and commercial offerings and Industry dominating today's landscape.

Don knew each and every pioneer and just as many of them had done, he had worked hard, married, raised a family, helped neighbours, valued and respected the community that surrounded him and 'stepped up' to help others in time of need.

However, Don went one step further than most other people.

He entered local government and invested over a quarter of a century representing his community as a councillor, serving as deputy mayor for seven years and mayor for fourteen years during that time.

In fact, Don's length of service (14 years) as mayor remains unchallenged to this day.

Don Miguel served the Cockburn community as a councillor and Mayor from 1965 until 1993. His tenure began when Cockburn was still part of Fremantle Roads Board, through its evolution to a Shire, a Town, and later to a City.

He became inaugural Mayor of the City of Cockburn when the former Town, of which he was also Mayor, attained City status on October 26, 1979.

Don successfully contested an annual vote by his fellow councillors for fourteen consecutive years to retain the position of mayor until he retired from Council in 1993.

He was known for his robust discussion at Council meetings and his strong advocacy for Cockburn right up to his passing.

His direct and forthright advice to mayors, councillors and CEOs over his long and distinguished local government career was always measured, relevant and focused.

Don's significant contribution to local government and across his beloved Cockburn resulted in him being conferred with the title of Honorary Freeman of the City of a Cockburn on 15 May 1984; in recognition of his dedicated service to the Cockburn district.

The honour recognises local nominees who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and commitment by making an extensive and distinguished contribution to the community, beyond local government activities, for a significant period of time.

Such is the status of Honorary Freeman only five people in Cockburn's long history have had the honour bestowed upon them – each being either a shire president/mayor or councillor.

Those persons are; Mr Joe Cooper, JP, Mr Alan Thomas JP, Mr Wally Hagan, OAM, JP, Mr Ray Lees, JP and Mr Don Miguel, OAM, JP himself.

Earlier Donna made reference to Don cleaning and polishing his shotgun when suitors arrived on the doorstep of their family home.

During the height of local government reform in 2014 - 2015 Don spoke to me several times indicating the need to have those shotguns held by the City taken out of their cabinet and cleaned and polished.

He said when push comes to shove; go down to the border with Fremantle and fire a few rounds to let them know that you mean business.

His clear message to me was to stand tall and when the voices started to be raised make sure your voice is heard above all - don't let them rail road you - take the community with you and don't give an inch.

Don and his wife June have had a profound impact on our community - together they stood proudly side by side with a generation of people who helped lay the foundations for what Cockburn is today; a vibrant City of over 115,000 people, at the forefront of local government in Australia; one that respects and values its pioneering families and their descendants and that has plans for the future based on the solid foundations laid by our forefathers.

I extend sincere condolences on behalf of the elected members, staff and community of Cockburn to June, Susan, Julie, Alison, Donna and their extended families and friends on the passing of a true family man and a great Cockburn identity.

In your heart know that Don's legacy forms part of the history of Cockburn and importantly will continue to influence and shape your families for years to come.

Rest peacefully Don.