

Hugh Oswald Christian Maasdorp
16 March 1922 – 9 December 2016
(Day House and Upper House 1935 – 1940)

On 16 March 1922 Hugh was born and he died on the night of the Old Andean Reunion in Harare on the 9th December 2016 after an eventful life. He was an only child. His father farmed at Vimy Ridge, Carlisle Bridge and was also a surveyor, qualifying at St Andrews in the first University Course (the start of Rhodes). His mother, a Royal College of Music London graduate, fostered his singing in the Cathedral of St Michaels and St Georges for seven years. There he won the choir scholarship and spent his last two years at St Andrews in Upper House. He loved the companionship, sport and setting of his school.

The day he finished writing matric in 1941 he and a pal Fuller volunteered for the South African Airforce, was washed out (as most were) as a pilot and trained as a wireless operator / air gunner, saw service in 21 Squadron, bombing installations in the desert, Sicily and Italy. He was commissioned as an officer in the field for his quick thinking in an awkward situation. He took part in the last European raid over Salzburg in a Liberator and was demobbed in Cape Town exactly five years later to the day.

After a few years at the University of Cape Town, he joined the Rhodesian Government's survey department and with his wife Leslee and new born Dorothy lived in Rhodesia, later Zimbabwe, all his life. His sons Richard and Adrian were born in Umtali, now Mutare. As Kariba was being built, he led a private team (having left the service for a few years) to survey the upper level of the lake's shore line and also to establish bench marks for the Surveyor-General's records to register later any subsidence of the land under the heaviest weight of water ever dammed. His work and wild life escapades in the wilderness are to be published later.

The rest of his working life was spent in the Town Planning Department surveying townships along the length and breadth of the country. It was often a lonely life but he enjoyed working with a very efficient and highly motivated set of civil servants. He received government commendation for carrying on working under dangerous war-time conditions.

When he retired in 1982, he managed a wilderness education camp on the Zambezi River for a while and undertook private surveying assignments. During these 36 years of retirement he had several lucky escapes, travelled worldwide and supported his growing family. His great love of cricket started at St Andrews and later he played for social groups and became an ardent supporter of Zimbabwean cricket, watching this team up to the last few weeks of his life as well as English and South African teams on TV.

Hugh held strong opinions such as a dislike of any form of discrimination and was outspoken in wanting freedom for all in the country of his adoption.

It was always a proud moment when he dressed up in the Scottish tartan. Try as we might in Scotland we did not succeed in finding the Graham tartan cloth the uniform was made of.

Hugh was a talented story teller and had a quick wit and great sense of humour. In his last few weeks he mentioned twice that he took comfort from in knowing his name would be read out at the commemoration service and it would be inscribed on the Clock Tower Roll of Honour.

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