

Anthony Frederick Teggin (Dr) (Armstrong 1958 - 1962)

Anthony passed away on 22 December 2011.

by Neil Wright – Friend of over 50 years:

I have fond memories of Anthony, they go back to our school days at St Andrew's College in Grahamstown. His brother, Chris, was my contemporary and Anthony was a year younger. I left in 1961 and Anthony in 1962. We stayed in contact throughout our adult lives. I knew him well. The most contact I had with him was when I lived in the Cape. On a fairly regular basis I would have dinner with him and the family on a Friday evening. Regrettably when I left the Cape in 1997 to live in KwaZulu-Natal I did not contact him as much as I would have liked. He phoned me on one occasion and said "I can't understand why you have not contacted me – do you still remember me?" Anthony could be very direct and that was a little daunting for some. But, one could never forget Anthony. There was a massive presence about him. He loved telling stories and he always had a refreshing take on current events. He was optimistic mostly and never had a bad word to say about any friend or members of the family. He admired his friends and family and was full of praise for their achievements or for them as a person. If there were problems there were always solutions. So, I remember Ant – I called him Ant – for being positive. He was well read and a very interesting person. I enjoyed his company.

Ant liked to exaggerate; he was a master of hyperbole. "I have thought of you every day of my life since you left The Cape," he once said to me...nonsense!.. but his exaggeration endeared one to him. Once on the phone, to his first wife Sheila, he received an absolute earful about something. He listened for a while and then gently put the receiver down. He then turned to me and said. "Sheila tends to get her priorities wrong". He was very talented and some would say he did not always fulfil his potential. He was a superb athlete at school, won races (100 metres, 200 metres, 400 metres, 1500 metres), broke records but did not after school take this talent further. He was not a ball player, so cricket and tennis were not his games. In rugby he played wing and if he caught the ball at the right time, he had the speed to outrun his opponents. Academically he had no problems – first class matric, he never dropped a subject doing medicine at Wits and then qualifying as a psychiatrist. He practiced and studied in England for a while, but most of his career was spent in Cape Town. Again he had the potential to take his career further, by doing research, writing papers and making a contribution to academia. His contribution was limited to a few papers. He did, however relish discussion with academics' and that must have been stimulating for both.

As a family man, he was married three times – firstly to Sheila (his school days sweetheart) marrying her when he was a first year medical student. They had two children – Douglas and Nicola. He later married Lily in the early eighties, had two sons – Faure and Alexander. Finally marrying Jennifer, they lived in Meadowridge, Cape, where he practiced psychiatry from home, until the end. I saw a lot of Lily and her sons when I was in the Cape. I was godfather to Faure. I may not have been the best of godfathers, but I always knew what Faure was up to; now a law graduate from Stellenbosch University. Anthony had a special relationship with his only daughter, Nicola. She was also an athlete, has a very outward going personality, teaches maths in Johannesburg and lives in the old family home in Greenside. Anthony did not make it easy for those who wanted to date his daughter. Again his directness could be daunting. Anthony was also a talented artist – a hobbyist artist, self-taught, mostly impressionistic style. He could also write well, had a few articles published. One of our last conversations was about a book he wanted to write. The book was going to correct the misapprehension about a painting or leopard skin (I am not sure which), Anthony was alleged to have removed from parliament. He did not tell me the details and it happened after I had left Cape Town. Sadly the book will now not see the light of day. Somebody needs to correct this; Anthony suffered some adverse publicity over this.

All of us who knew Anthony and were privileged to be a friend or a member of his family are the richer for our relationship with him. We will miss him. Many of us will regret we did not keep in closer contact. Let us not make the same mistake with anyone else we should keep close to. I will long think of Anthony and share at this time with friends and family these mixed feelings one inevitably has, grief and missing, but also relief (thankfulness) – nobody could ask for a better way to go. Then all that was positive about Anthony and there was a lot, lives on in our memories. His biological family are fortunate to have his gene pool; aspects of his brilliance will live on through family. His life is a cause for celebration. Thank you Anthony Teggin for the friendship, memories and time we had together. May his soul rest in peace.

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A tribute to Anthony Teggin by Rob Anderson:

Ant Teggin was such a vivid personality that my memory of him cannot be eclipsed by only occasional encounter in recent years. He was a special friend from the moment we first met in Ingleside as Armstrong new boys in 1959: a controversial character, but always the centre of the scene with the most lively conversation, stories and ideas. He was the archetypal lateral thinker. While the rest of us swotted for our exams, he plotted to burgle the school secretary's office and get advance copies of each of the papers he would have to write; not because he wasn't bright enough to excel according to the traditional rules but because previewing the questions was a greater challenge than spotting them! In a war time setting he would have been a national hero, always capable of brilliance but in an unconventional way. He was the colleague of choice if bunking out to the cinema. I have a vivid memory of waiting with Ant and Dave Wylde well past midnight hidden in the hedge behind Armstrong for the school to go to sleep so that we could re-enter the House. First 'Can' Harvey walked past the hedge taking his dog for a late night walk, then 'Horse' Harker to post a sheaf of birthday letters to OA's at about 1.00am. Ant had it arranged that the window from the veranda would be open for us to get back in but we couldn't move till the lights all went out.

He had an illustrious medical career but most of his contemporaries will remember him for his athletic ability. In our final year (like his older brother before him), as I remember it, he won every distance from the 100 yards to the mile; the absolute house-hero bringing Armstrong in ahead of Upper, Mullins etc. decisively in the final count. His was not however an individual talent. It was always important to be part of his "team" and as captain of Armstrong athletics he provided the leadership which inspired Dave Wylde, Ron Forbes and also-rans such as myself to our own contributions; but it wasn't a traditional form of leadership: he achieved his athletic prowess despite smoking heavily throughout his school career; only saved in his final year by the dispensation allowed to prefects.

As an exceptionally young father he had to finance a family while still at university. Amongst other ploys he sold cutlery sets door-to-door; buying each new set to be sold using the deposit from his latest customer. He also held very successful "wig" parties, like tupperware parties, in Jo'burg office blocks, and ended his medical training not only with a good degree but a healthy bank balance and a private aeroplane shared with a fellow medical student. With a specialisation in psychiatry, he came over to England and practised at St Thomas' Hospital in London - quickly rising to be a consultant; at the time the youngest consultant in this renowned hospital. Amongst other things he was exceptionally successful with drug rehabilitation. I can remember asking him what special line it was he took. He answered that it was simply straight "Spencer Chapman outward bound bull-shit"- he required his patients to get up at 6.00 am and take a cold winter dip in the Brockwell Park open air lido. "It works a treat", he said. I asked whether he led by example. "Don't be daft", he replied. Meeting up with Ant and his family a few years later at his home in Cape Town on his return to SA, we drank nothing but champagne; which seemed a bit extravagant for a simple lunch but he explained that having experienced the price of the stuff in the UK he couldn't help buying it

by the case knowing that he was only buying a bottle at UK prices. He added a qualification in psychology to his specialism in psychiatry, but I never discussed with him why he so desperately needed his friends' "admiration". He had a self assurance that was never afraid to challenge orthodoxy but at the same time he needed the attention of those around him.

More recently, I believe, he sought out his friend Dave Wylde's company at a rugby match on Lower Field when Dave was Headmaster. Dave in public relations mode, surrounded by parents and Council Members and sitting with his opposite number, understandably found his friend's less than sober contribution to the party awkward; but we will miss his disregard for pomp and circumstance. Truth is I could have better spared a better friend and I regret not having seen him more often in recent years when visiting SA. He deserves to be well remembered.

Rob Anderson