

My brother **Gavin D'Arcy (Armstrong 1959 – 1961)** died earlier this year and at the time of his Memorial Service you flew the flag at half-mast, a gesture much appreciated by family and friends alike. I also sent a few words at the time.

We thank you very much for joining today's memorial for Gavin, and must apologise that none of the U.K. family was able to reach Johannesburg before next week. Gavin had remained very private concerning his illness and so we were not well prepared for the recent news.

As Gavin's brother Stanton, sister Paddy, nephews Chris, Andrew, Bruce & Robert and niece Charlotte, we had known him most closely at different stages of his life:

- as a school boy, very keen on sports
- as an uncle living the glamorous life in London we wished we could emulate
- or most often, the mischievous uncle – pulling our legs with jokes about TV's on his car steering wheel back in the 70's, or returning us from trips out of boarding school so late we had to climb in through the Common Room windows!

A common theme, though, was his love for South Africa and talk of the ways by which he might get back. His parents were very proud of his starting over and moving back to South Africa, and very happy knowing he loved the country in which they had spent most of their lives. And once he was back, we could never persuade him to leave again!

So apart from being a target destination for occasional exciting holiday visits, our more recent relationships ran via Skype and e-mail. Gavin kept up a lively and competitive banter on political and sporting fronts as well. Despite his grandfather playing rugby for Ireland, he relished any mis-steps made by the Home Nations teams, particularly at the hands of the Springboks. And he usually had the upper hand on the cricket front as well, although he wouldn't be so pleased about Wednesday's result - sorry Gavin!

Gavin always loved animals and he had a way with them - from Magic his first dog in South Africa, to Putsey his cat, and all of ours! We have memories of him taking our pet rabbit for a walk on a lead.

And of course his dogs in J'burg – they were his everything, and he would tell us every detail about where they came from and every funny little habit they had. He was always able to make even the most anxious animal relax in his presence.

Gavin leaves behind young great nieces and nephews whom he didn't meet but whose early sporting achievements he followed keenly from afar - particularly their progress with rugby:

- his great niece Alex winning a 'spirit of Rugby award' last month
- great nephew Jamie who is just starting his career in Refereeing Rugby

- and great nephew Jordan whose team has recently won the Gloucestershire County Cup

Everyone will remember Gavin in their own way, as no doubt you will. For us, we will be thinking of him joining his parents Pat and Bob D'Arcy at Askania Nova, the farm in the Karoo which they all loved to visit, courtesy of the kind permission of the Newton family. And we will also remember the network of good friends and neighbours in South Africa who were so supportive and important to him over so many years.

Thank you again for joining today and remembering Gavin.

Stanton D'Arcy

Armstrong 1954 - 1957