



LIFE MEMBER

John Thomas (“Jack”) Morgan

3 December 1920–16 July 2005



Jack Morgan, drawing by his brother, a graphic artist

John Thomas Morgan was born in Warrnambool, the fifth and youngest child of Charles and Elizabeth Morgan. He attended Christian Brothers College in Warrnambool where he excelled at athletics and football. As a teenager he would win the sprint against adults at the annual butchers and bakers’ picnic. In 1935 the family moved to Geelong where Jack’s father managed the Prince of Wales Hotel.

Jack played in the St Joseph’s premiership and champion team in the GDFA B Division in 1939. He played with the GFC reserves for a year, then enlisted on 22 May 1941, serving within Australia (see Chapter 10). After he was discharged from the army and Geelong was in recess, he played with Carlton reserves in 1942 and 1943. He returned to GFC in 1944 and 1945, playing eight games with the firsts, but mostly with the reserves. He said Carlton treated him well and he always had a soft spot for them, but Geelong was his team.

Jack later played in the Ballarat Football League

with several other ex-Geelong players including Ced Hovey. In 1947, Jack met Ced’s sister Audrey at the Palais, and they were married in 1949.

In 1952, the family moved to Yallourn. They had two children, Marie and Bernie. Three more children were born there—Denis, Jenny and Geoff. Jack was a station master with the Victorian Railways. He played football for Moe and played in Victorian Railways interstate football and cricket teams.

For much of his working life, Jack worked two jobs. When the children were young his second job was in a wood and briquette yard. They remember him joining in their backyard footy games after work, covered in briquette dust ‘and all you could see was his smiling face and his glasses.’ When the Morgans returned to Geelong in 1964 they bought a milk bar in Geelong West. Jack also worked for a few years at J.B. Scott and twelve years at Dalgety’s.

George Gniel (who was married to Jack’s sister Joyce) invited Jack to join the Geelong Past Players and Officials Association. Jack was elected to the committee in 1965, was Assistant Secretary 1967–72 and Secretary / Treasurer (1974–98). Jack was proud to be a member of the committee responsible for securing the past players’ clubrooms in 1987.

Jack Hart says that during the years they were



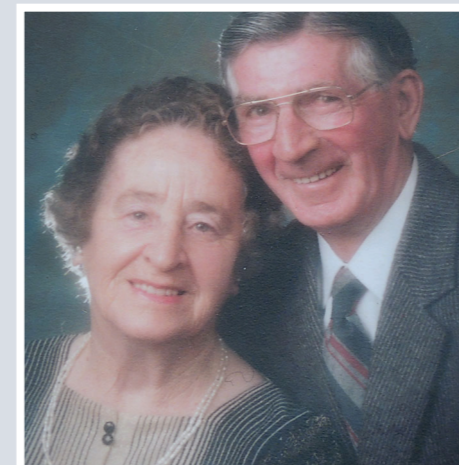
in the umpires’ rooms ‘Jack Morgan did as much as anybody to keep the past players club going.’¹

Jack’s family say the clubrooms were an important place for past players from every team to see each other again. His daughter Marie says:

The Past Players’ Association was part of our world. Dad loved it so much. It wasn’t just a building or a place to watch the game ... the friendship dad had with all those fellows was enduring. It wasn’t just when they played. It came through in their work life and just seeing each other down the street.²

Marie recalls that her dad was so busy on game days that he rarely got to see all of the game. However, once they got the television in the clubrooms he could watch the game from the rooms. When he was appointed Secretary / Treasurer, Marie remembers he liked everything to be done correctly. An Armourguard vehicle would pick up the money at the clubrooms and on Mondays Jack would count it:

We would get a call from Russ Renfrey. ‘How is it going? Does it balance?’ Mum would joke, ‘Hold on Russ. He’s under the table—he’s looking for five cents he can’t find.’ [He] felt the responsibility but he really enjoyed the role. When he retired from work, the Past Players Association was the spark in his life.³



When Jack was distributing the past players’ tickets for the finals people would come to the house to collect them and the phone would ring constantly with people wanting tickets. Marie says:

Football was dad’s life and mum’s life as well. We took mum and dad to the Town Hall when the Geelong team came back after losing the 1989 grand final. Dad said we had to go and show our support. We stood on rubbish bins so we could see.⁴

Jack was made a life member of the Past Players and Officials Association in 1976. He was a committee member for more than 30 years, retiring in 2001. Peter Menzies says:

He was a lovely man. If there is a heaven, Jack Morgan is there.⁵



Sources

- 1 Jack Hart, talking to Susan Kruss, 17 March 2013
- 2 Marie Beggs, talking to Susan Kruss, 8 March 2013
- 3 Marie Beggs, talking to Susan Kruss, 8 March 2013
- 4 Minutes, 26 Nov. 1981
- 5 Peter Menzies, talking to Susan Kruss, March 2013