

Graham Colin Paine



Born 7th September 1947 Passed 3rd August 2019

WILLIAM FORSTER CHAMBERS



Graham was born at Katoomba Hospital, NSW, the son of Lance and Judith Paine. He was a difficult breach birth. Graham grew as any normal child in his home of Lawson, NSW and within two years was joined by his sister, Jennifer. Not until school did anyone notice any learning difficulties with Graham. He was slow to learn in class, singled out and continually bullied in the school playgrounds.

Graham's father, a returned war veteran who fought many campaigns in the Middle East, had mental issues of his own. The strain of having a son with mental problems was too much for Lance. The family broke up and Lance took his own life when Graham was 11 years old.

Graham managed a short period at high school, but with no special training available, it was not working out and by now the bullying was taking its toll. Fortunately for Graham, his next door neighbour, Ronnie, the town tough guy, bully, thug, became Graham's protector. Many of Graham's bullies were left laying flat in the playground.

Graham's mother introduced Graham to the Katoomba Sheltered Workshop. Graham enjoyed this work and was soon in the routine of being woken and shaved by his mother, having breakfast and being dressed and ready for the bus to pick him up from his front door. At the end of the day, Graham would be delivered back to his front door. His mother would still be at work at the local children's hospital so Graham soon learned to make a sandwich for his dinner each night.

When the family could afford a television, Graham was in a new world of his own. Graham was intrigued by numbers – the number of commercials during his favourite show, scores of sports games, the more numbers the better.

In 1966 Graham's sister Jenny brought home her new boyfriend, Allan Carpenter who was to become Jenny's husband 3 years later. Allan was a tradesman and Graham liked the addition of a male around the house. There were lots of jobs around the house of the widow Mrs Paine for Allan to do. Graham was always there to help even if only to pass tools to be involved.

Sadly, in those times there was shame on a family with a handicapped child and Graham was to remain out of sight when visitors called. The only exceptions were very close family.

By the early 80s Jenny, Allan and their two sons ventured to Darwin. Shortly after their move, Graham's mother succumbed to kidney disease and passed away leaving Graham on his own. Graham was brought to Darwin to join his sister Jenny's family.



Jenny connected Graham with HPA and Kokoda Industries where Graham thrived. With Jenny's help, Graham was very soon able to care for himself, read bus numbers to catch buses to where he need to be and would make the short walk to the Railway Club in Parap, his favourite haunt for years to come. Graham's first ever birthday party, his 40th, was held at the Railway Club.

HPA were venturing into new ground, training and helping handicapped people to live independently. Graham became HPA's star pupil. In record time he graduated through all the courses and was able to live independently. Graham ventured to Tenpin bowling and was hooked. Graham won many trophies and medals for his bowling ability. Graham also travelled interstate for sporting events to represent the NT.

Graham tried out for a 'real' job at William Forster Chambers and was interviewed by Colin McDonald QC and Lorraine Martin, the chambers librarian. Graham worked for William Forster Chambers for just short of 30 years.

Graham lived in the notorious Karringal Flats. Due to noisy and aggressive neighbours which significantly affected Graham's quality of life, Graham was moved to a unit in Karama.

Initially Graham was not completely happy about the move but soon developed a close and abiding relationship with the Karama Tavern and the support and affection of its staff.

In about 2010 his kidney function was reduced to a level where Graham required dialysis to survive. That effectively ruled out traveling for sport that had given him so much pleasure. As with everything in Graham's life, he took this in his stride and did not complain.

From the start of 2019, Graham's health was declining and he was losing weight. He was hospitalised mid-June as he was malnourished. Following his discharge from hospital Graham took annual leave. Graham did not ask for leave from work, he rarely did, it was suggested he take some leave which, thankfully, he agreed to. Unfortunately, whilst on leave Graham was readmitted to hospital on 12 July as he was failing to thrive.

At the end of July, it became clear that his dialysis treatment was no longer effective in clearing the impurities from his blood which meant there was no way to keep his kidney condition at bay. On Monday 29 July, on the advice of his doctors, Graham was moved to the Palliative Care Hospice at RDH. Graham passed away on the morning of 3 August 2019.

Special mention is made of Anna Pavlovic-Stiff. Graham was Anna's very first client when she decided she wanted to be a disability support worker over 20 years ago. Anna was ever present in Graham's life, as mentioned, initially as a client but then as a friend and confidante. Her dedication to Graham was well above and beyond the call of duty and she helped Graham live his best life.

Graham was a loyal, hard-working and ever reliable member of William Forster Chambers and an icon of Darwin.

He will be missed. ■