

Title : The Biography Of Clifford Dwyer (Papa Cliff)

Written by : Freya Bridget Garner Dwyer

Papa Cliff was born in Murchison on the 25th of December 1946.

He left Murchison when he was about four years old. He can't remember much of the place but what he can remember is their dog had pups under the house. He always had to climb under and bring the puppies out from underneath to look after them, as he was the youngest child then. He ended up with 2 big brothers and 1 little sister.

Cliff's family moved to North Melbourne. His parents bought a Cafe with a house attached to it. They lived there until he was eight and he went to school at St Michael's school. They moved again this time to a house in Flemington across the road from the old Royal Children's Hospital. He liked playing cricket and AFL at the Royal Children's park with his friends. He also liked riding bikes and playing hidey (hide and seek).

A doctor used to come to the school to examine the students. When he was nine the doctor noticed there was something irregular with his heart beat. His Mum took him on the tram to the hospital. They figured out Cliff's main blood vessel was pinched. The doctors told Cliff's parents he had to have an operation or he might die by the time he was nineteen. Then again the operation was so complex he might die in that too! Being told he was going to have his appendix taken out, Cliff didn't worry. Luckily he survived the operation and he stayed in hospital for a month. His family always came to visit. He made a quick and full recovery.

Cliff found pigeon racing cool. Before his operation, his Dad said he could get a pigeon if he had the operation. So he did, after he was let out of hospital they went to the Victorian Market and bought two pigeons. One day someone left the pigeon's cage open and the pigeons escaped. So he got some more. These ones were not normal pigeons like the last two. They were racing pigeons. Cliff and his sister Coleen used to do ballroom dancing and Coleen's dance partner's dad built him a pigeon cage. He started pigeon racing when he was 16 and hasn't stopped since.

Cliff has had lots of jobs. He trained as a teacher and played football for North Melbourne in the seconds. One of the people he played

football with came from Cohuna. He asked once if Cliff wanted to come up for the weekend because his girlfriend was coming home from Bendigo for the weekend and she's got a best friend, I'll introduce you (that was Nana Ros.) He went to a wedding with Ros and he left the teacher's and got a job in the railways in Kerang. Then Cliff got a transfer to the railways in Melbourne where Ros was working. After that Cliff started working at the Australian Stevedoring in the office. Then he worked for Tongala milk products. He still worked there when Nana and him got married.

Then Ros and he went to Cohuna one weekend and they found an empty shop. He asked his brother Laurie (who had 2 sport shops in Melbourne) if he could supply him with toys, sports equipment, bikes and shotguns for farmers. So he opened the shop in Cohuna. There were just the two of them then.

Cliff always wanted to be a dairy farmer because Ros's mum and dad had a dairy farm and he used to go out there and see the calves. He sold the shop and bought a farm. Then Ros had Leo (my dad) and Reuben and then a few years later Amber.

Cliff's brother Laurie was interested in buying ostriches so Cliff sold most of the farm and bought the ostriches. They didn't make any money. So Cliff got another job where he called on 550 dairy farmers every 5 weeks and sold them dairy farming products. Then he worked for Murray Goulburn and sold hay and other things.

When a big drought came, he decided to become a nurse! He studied in Bendigo for two years and got his qualification as a nurse. He is still a nurse now after 15 years.

Cliff has a dog named Kimberley. She is 15 years old. She is very important to him. He loves her a lot.

Cliff loves footy. His brother and dad played for North Melbourne, and Cliff and another brother played in the seconds (the reserves team). His two nephews played for North Melbourne too. Cliff enjoyed football because he was good at it. He loved playing it with his friends because back then not many people had TVs, computers or phones.

One of Cliff's happiest memories is when all of the Dwyer family went to Albury for Ros's 70th birthday in March 2020. The whole family spent time together. His children and his grandchildren all came. Some of Cliff's other happiest memories are his wedding day, his children being born and his grandchildren being born.

*'The best thing in life is family. Your family is the number one thing. You can win a premiership, you can become a lawyer or a writer or a doctor, but family is the most important thing.'*

*- Clifford Noel Dwyer -*