

IAN SCOTT HENDERSON : A TRIBUTE

IAN SCOTT HENDERSON was born on 13 September 1900, the third child of George Christopher and Edith Charlotte Henderson. He was married on 12 January 1929 to Kathleen Elizabeth White and he died on 10 November 1981.

Such are the bare details of the important events in a life, but behind such dry statistics, recordable for virtually every person, lies a wealth of human experience in all its richness and variety, like an enormous and intricate tapestry. Ian's contribution to that great tapestry of life will extend its effects for many generations to come.

At periods in his life my father was no stranger to adversity, both human and financial. He lost his own father at an age when he could hardly remember him, and consequent financial instability in the family prevented him from completing his formal schooling. Later, the Depression of the early Thirties forced him to leave a farming partnership with his two elder brothers, and return to the Gold Mines, a life one always felt he regarded as a form of partial exile. He never let these events sour him : in fact they helped to form his character.

On the other hand the happy days when fortune smiled more benignly far outweighed the darker days. His schooldays were marked by some noteworthy pranks and sporting achievements, and he always looked back on his years at the Durban High School with great nostalgia.

The real key to Ian's life, I believe, was a great sense of family. As the last surviving grandchild of Joseph and Jane Henderson he was always conscious, to borrow a thought from Saul of Tarsus, that he was a member of no mean family. His devotion to his own immediate family, and then by analogy to the extended family in the widest sense, was the touchstone of his concern. Never can there have been a more devoted couple than Kay and Ian, and her untimely death in 1959 at the age of fifty-four, totally devastated him until he retired in 1963, and began his new life in Glen Ashley. Here the old spirit, healed by time, slowly returned, and he became the

Pop we all knew, loved and admired in these autumn years of his life.

As a father he was noteworthy by any standards. Frustrated as he was in his own quest for education, no sacrifice was too great for him and Mom to ensure that his own children should become fully qualified, either academically or professionally. Nor were higher ideals of acknowledgement of God's sovereignty or service to fellow man neglected. It was not education, but religiously based education, that was important. We all went to Church schools, not because they were "smart" schools, but because of their ethos. Seldom could there have been a man less impressed by worldly trappings, or less committed to the mere accumulation of earthly substance. Education was enjoined because of the widened opportunities to be of service. That very old fashioned, almost aristocratic virtue, noblesse oblige, was something he imparted by a kind of osmosis.

Just as education was important to him, so was travel and for much the same motives. It broadened the mind and gave one greater insight into the human condition. It too, like education, was a family affair and his meanderings, first with all of us, then with Clive and latterly with Linda, became legendary.

If one were to epitomise a typical and triumphant moment in Pop's life, whereby we should like to fix him in our memory, we could look back to just over a year ago to his Eightieth birthday at Briar Ghyll. To see him there, the paterfamilias, almost the tribal induna, surrounded by children, children-in-law, doting grandchildren and scores of assorted nieces, nephews, friends and well-wishers was to see the man we all knew, loved and respected.

Two events in the last year of his life were of particular significance to him : the birth of his first great-grandchild Megan and the award of a Rhodes Scholarship to his grandchild Margaret.

Then came the final illness, bravely and patiently borne with that characteristic fighting spirit which was so uniquely his.

Ian Scott Henderson, man of magnanimity and integrity, devoted husband, loving father, doting grandfather, warmhearted friend, as we offer you our parting salute we realise that our human feelings of grief are tempered by a deeper sentiment, that of thankfulness for the inheritance you have bequeathed by the life which you lead. The text that comes most readily to mind is what Our Lord said of Nathaniel: "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile".

May the Father, who knows the secrets of all hearts welcome Ian in Mercy and in Justice.

(Delivered at St Margaret's-on-the-Hill, Northlands, Durban on Thursday 12 November 1981 by his eldest son, Derek.)