

A tribute to Solly Kranidiotis

TO Mrs. K., Yiota, Helen, Johnny and all close members and friends of the family, our deepest sympathy on the loss of a loving husband, wonderful father, and warm friend.

For me, it is indeed an honour to bid a sad, yet rather fond farewell to SOLON IOANNOU KRANIDIOTIS on behalf of the many, many South Africans of all races amongst whom he lived, worked and enjoyed life.

Solly, as he was better known to all of us, was born in Cyprus in 1918 and emigrated to South Africa at the tender age of 16. After working in both East London and Umtata for a number of years, he finally moved to Mount Frere in 1940 and established that unique family business which we all know so well.

Some years after the passing of Helen and Johnny's mother in 1959, Solly met and married Lulu, and they were blessed with Yiota who, together with her cousins kept Solly so young for so long. Who can ever forget how proud Solly was to entertain well over 500 guests at that wonderful wedding in Kokstad when Yiota married Charles Christodoulou a few years ago?

I personally first had the pleasure of meeting Solly in 1968 and I immediately realised that this was not just an astute businessman. He was at once a loving husband, a wonderful father, an unbelievably generous person, and a proud South African. So much so, in fact, that I was honoured to be the official witness when, at Solly's instigation, both Mrs. K. and Yiota accepted full South African citizenship from the Magistrate in Kokstad in 1974.

But the one thing I remember most about Solly was that precious attribute which so few people possess - a very real and fantastic sense of humour. Who else could actually laugh in the face of such adversity at losing everything he possessed in Cyprus when the Turks

invaded the Island in 1974?

I remember him chuckling and saying to me - "John, you'll now have to call me an ex-millionaire!" And who can ever forget Solly's chuckle? It will certainly live with me for many years to come. Even on those rare occasions when Solly was a little grumpy, he still had time for a laugh.

When I first visited Mrs. K. shortly after Solly's passing, she turned to me and said - "John, where is Solly now?" All I can say is that whilst he may no longer be here in

person, he certainly remains all around us in Kokstad.

Long before the present feverish business activity in Kokstad, Solly saw the town's potential and he invested his resources in numerous property developments which attracted many large businesses for the benefit of the community as a whole. And who will ever be able to forget Solly each time they pass Kyrenia House on the corner of Hope and Barclay streets?

Not many of us actually get

the chance to meet a legend in his own lifetime. Those of us who were touched by Solly indeed had that opportunity for there can be no doubt that he was a living legend in both Kokstad and Mount Frere.

Solly, old friend, thank you for the laughs, thank you for the advice, thank you for your generosity and thank you for the business - you might have moved on, but I and many others will never forget you.

May you rest in peace.

John Vos

