

Mr Alan Carpenter; Mr Troy Buswell; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Eric Ripper; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Bob Kucera; Mr Colin Barnett; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Paul Omodei; Mrs Carol Martin; Ms Sue Walker; Mr Max Trenorden; Deputy Speaker

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## SIR CHARLES COURT

### *Condolence Motion*

**MR A.J. CARPENTER (Willagee — Premier)** [12.01 pm] — without notice: I move —

That this house records its sincere regret at the death of former Western Australian Premier Sir Charles Court, places on record its appreciation for his long and esteemed public service and tenders its deep sympathy to his family in their bereavement.

Sir Charles Court was born in Crawley, Sussex, England, in 1911 and came to Australia with his parents when he was just six weeks old. He came from humble, hardworking origins. That work ethic stayed with him all of his life. As a young boy he attended Perth Boys School, leaving school after passing his intermediate certificate. He had developed a keen interest in music and became a talented cornet player, winning at the age of 18 the Australian Champion of Champions Award. He studied accounting at night school while working as a newspaper delivery boy and joined a firm of auditors in 1927. He began his own accounting business in 1933, and later became a foundation partner with Hendry Rae and Court, a prominent, well-known company. He left the practice from 1940 to 1946 to serve in the Australian Army, in which he had a distinguished career, being promoted from a private to lieutenant colonel while serving in the South West Pacific during World War II.

He joined the Liberal Party in 1946 and won the seat of Nedlands in 1953 when he was one of two Liberal Party candidates to contest the seat. In his maiden speech—which is very interesting reading—delivered in this place on 20 August 1953, the new member for Nedlands was humble in assessing the challenges of his new role. He said —

I realise I have much to learn in connection with matters political and am very conscious of my immaturity in that direction. It has been made very apparent to me . . . in the last few months that no matter how far one may have progressed in his professional or civil vocation he is a mere child when it comes to his initiation into the political affairs of a State.

Sir Charles went on to serve a long apprenticeship under Sir David Brand, and had been a member of Parliament for more than 20 years before he became Premier in 1974. Sir Charles' maiden speech also gave three early signals of the directions he would take during his 29 years of service to the Parliament. First, he identified the ongoing challenges in federal-state relations caused by one level of government having the greater responsibility for raising revenue, with the other level of government being responsible for delivering services. Secondly, he opposed a timid policy of development, telling the Parliament in that first speech that he was always prepared to accept a calculated risk if it would result in genuine progress. Thirdly, he called on the more populous eastern states to think in terms of all of Australia and the national interest when it came to development. Each of these beliefs would characterise his many years of public service.

Sir Charles was appointed Minister for Industrial Development, Railways and the North-West in 1959 by the then Premier, Sir David Brand. During his time, he oversaw the development of the Ord River scheme and the continued development of the Kwinana industrial strip. Sir Charles was instrumental in convincing the commonwealth government to lift its ban on iron ore exports and worked hard to develop trading relationships with Japanese importers that came to underpin the development of the iron ore industry in the Pilbara. Sir Charles became Leader of the Liberal Party in 1972 and became Western Australia's twenty-first Premier following the defeat of the Tonkin government in 1974. He remained Premier until his retirement in January 1982.

As Premier, Sir Charles continued the industrial development initiatives of the Brand and then Tonkin governments, while expanding his own vision for further development of the state's rich resource and energy sector, particularly, as we all know, the development of the north west. Many believe that Sir Charles' most lasting achievement was his role in the establishment of the North West Shelf gas project, which saw the eventual development of a liquefied natural gas export industry, as well as securing a second major energy source for Western Australian industry and households. In keeping with the belief as expressed in his maiden speech that risk-taking was acceptable to achieve genuine development, Sir Charles chose to underwrite the North West Shelf project through a take-or-pay contract with the state-owned utility, State Energy Commission of WA. This decision had its detractors. The growth it facilitated in downstream processing industries, as well as the jobs created through the export income earned, have played an enormous role in creating the modern Western Australian economy that we are all benefiting from today. Also consistent with the beliefs expressed in his maiden speech, Sir Charles fought hard to secure a royalty flow to Western Australia from the North West Shelf gas project, giving the state government an additional income stream to use to deliver the services that all Western Australians wanted and needed. We cannot overemphasise the significance of this great achievement.

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While Premier, Sir Charles also recognised in many ways the importance of the arts, culture and education. He ensured that His Majesty's Theatre remained a Western Australian icon, and was a key driver in the development of the Perth Cultural Centre precinct and the Art Gallery of Western Australia, among innumerable other achievements.

Sir Charles resigned as Premier in 1982 after 29 years in Parliament. According to my notes, in his new year's message that followed the announcement of his retirement in December 1981, Sir Charles reflected —

Few regions of the world have the prospects that lie ahead of our state.

Despite a dampened world economic environment and restrictions at home and abroad, we have persevered and have put together a major development programme.

This programme will gather momentum in the coming year and will continue for many years into the future, endowing our State with a quality of life that economic development can make possible.

These are words that could well apply now, and the hard work, energy and vision of Sir Charles during his 29 years in public office played an immense role in creating both the quality of life we now enjoy and the opportunities we have for the future.

In addition to his many public achievements, Sir Charles married Rita, his first wife, in 1936 and together they raised five sons—Victor, Barry, Ken and Richard, who are in the Speaker's gallery today, and I welcome them, and Geoffrey, who lives in Melbourne. From those sons he had 16 grandchildren and, at last count, 19 great-grandchildren. I hope that count is accurate. Richard, of course, succeeded his father as the member for Nedlands and became Western Australia's twenty-sixth Premier in 1993. Following Lady Rita's death in 1992, Sir Charles married his second wife, Lady Judith, in 1996. Sir Charles is survived by Lady Judith.

Sir Charles was honoured and decorated many times for services to his country, including a military division of the Order of the British Empire in 1946 for service in World War II in the Bougainville and Papua New Guinea theatres; a Knight Bachelor in 1972; a Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George, a KCMG, in 1979; and a Knight of the Order of Australia in 1982.

Sir Charles will be remembered as a tireless, hard working and visionary champion of Western Australia and Australia. He fought fiercely to establish, build and promote the Western Australian economy both within Australia and in the international community. There is absolutely no doubt that his relentless pursuit of industrial development underpinned the strength of the modern Western Australian economy from which we all benefit today. In fact, I believe—I note that John Howard has said something similar—that no person in public life has had as much of an influence on the development of Western Australia, and indeed of Australia, in the past 50 or 60 years.

Of course, Sir Charles said and did things during his career that many people disagreed with. That is the nature of political life, particularly for a man of conviction. While he humbly declared himself a mere child in the political affairs of the state when he first entered this place, there is no doubt that he left this life a giant. Sir Charles' life and service to the state of Western Australia should be marked with a permanent memorial. I believe that a statue of Sir Charles in Perth would be an appropriate memorial of the former Premier. I have consulted with Richard Court, as the representative of the Court family, and he is supportive of such a memorial. I am grateful for that. A location has yet to be determined, but both Richard and I believe that somewhere along St Georges Terrace, possibly in the proposed resources precinct being planned for the west end of the city, would be an appropriate setting. Richard and I visited that location this morning. I nominated the Florence Hummerston Reserve on the corner of St Georges Terrace and Spring Street, because that location is symbolically important given Sir Charles' role in the development of the North West Shelf, as it is diagonally opposite the Woodside building. We will work with the Court family and the City of Perth to determine the best site for the memorial. The state government will shortly seek tenders from Western Australian artists to create the tribute. Richard Court will represent his family on a panel that will select the successful artist. A statue will be a fitting memorial to Sir Charles Court's extraordinary life.

On behalf of the state government and the people of Western Australia, I pay tribute to a great life, an extraordinary life, and extend my sympathies to Lady Judith and Sir Charles' sons, grandchildren and great grandchildren. I commend the motion to the house.

**MR T. BUSWELL (Vasse — Leader of the Opposition)** [12.14 pm]: I am both humbled and honoured to be given the opportunity to speak in support of this condolence motion on behalf of the opposition. The opposition supports the government's plan to construct a memorial to Sir Charles Court in consultation with the Court family. It is a fitting tribute to a giant of a man in the history of Western Australia.

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In my view, and in the view of many people, Sir Charles Court was the outstanding Premier of the twentieth century. He ranks alongside Sir John Forrest as a great builder of our state and the nation. It is to him more than any other individual that we owe our current prosperity and lifestyle. However, that was only part of his achievement. The late John Wheeldon, a former political opponent, aptly described him as a man of conspicuous character. Sir Charles Court not only advocated but also lived by the values of service to the community, the state and the nation.

Many stories can be repeated about Sir Charles' early life, but one characteristic fact is that at only 21, having worked previously as an office boy and articled clerk, he had the confidence and courage to begin his own accountancy practice in March 1933, which was during the depths of the Depression. He founded the firm Hendry Rae and Court in 1938. Whatever he did was done superbly and vigorously, such as notably winning the champion of champions brass solo at Tanunda in South Australia when he was only 18.

When he enlisted as a soldier in 1940, he made sure that he was not pigeonholed as a bandsman and sought overseas service, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel and being responsible for, among other things, disarming the 27 000-strong Japanese forces in Bougainville after the surrender in 1945. This required not only leadership, but also, equally, diplomatic skill and judgement. We should also remember and acknowledge that Sir Charles had an ability to put aside the hatred of war and recognise the humanity of the defeated Japanese, which would make future trading relations in the 1960s between our state and Japan much easier.

Sir Charles Court returned to civilian life determined to make a difference to Australia's post-war direction. He joined the new Liberal Party and involved himself in campaigning that resulted in Liberal governments being elected in Western Australia in 1947 and nationally in 1949. At that stage, he was not interested in a parliamentary seat, although he was overwhelmingly elected as the auditor of the Claremont town council in 1947, as his accountancy firm had become increasingly successful and respected. He was eventually persuaded to seek Liberal endorsement for the seat of Nedlands in 1952 in an attempt to regain it from its Independent Liberal member, the late David Grayden, who had won the seat in 1950. Sir Charles Court had to campaign in difficult circumstances, with the Liberal Party organisation unwisely endorsing a second Liberal candidate and with much of the parliamentary party prepared to accept the Independent member back into the fold. Sir Charles ultimately won the seat of Nedlands in 1953. He beat five other candidates, four of whom were designated as endorsed or unendorsed Liberals. His majority of 837 votes after preferences, nearly 55 per cent of the vote, was a tribute to his hard work and high standing in the community. In a contest with the former member three years later he was re-elected with 73 per cent of the vote. Sir Charles held the seat of Nedlands for 29 years and fought a further eight elections, in which he never drew less than two-thirds of the primary vote, except once when he was elected unopposed.

In the days before electorate officers and beyond, Sir Charles' home phone number was available to all in his electorate. The voting results say a lot about his attention to his constituents' concerns and problems. In 1957 Charles Court was elected unopposed as Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party when Sir David Brand replaced Sir Ross McLarty as the Leader of the Opposition. For 15 years he served a record term as deputy leader in a strong complimentary partnership with Sir David. They fought and won four successive elections. From 1959 until 1971, Sir Charles held the portfolios of industrial development and the north west, together with transport and railways until 1965 and 1967 respectively. It is difficult to overstate his achievements in those years, which saw the creation of our current iron ore industry, which required massive overseas investment and the building of infrastructure so often seen by developers in the Pilbara. It was an achievement for not only Western Australia, but also the nation. It is an achievement that has underpinned our prosperity and living standards. Thanks to Sir Charles Court's vision, the Ord River irrigation scheme commenced and heavy industry expanded in Kwinana.

At a seminar in 2004, Professor Geoffrey Bolton pointed out that in contrast to some pro-development entrepreneurs and Premiers of earlier times, Sir Charles Court could always back his vision with hard figures. Thanks to his discipline as an accountant, overseas developers were always convinced that the sums added up and that they were not dealing with an overoptimistic booster. In last year's tributes to Sir Charles, it was stated that he delivered economic growth whilst avoiding the evils of crony capitalism. Sir Charles later said of these times, "I was never overawed by the big things we were negotiating, the big firms we were dealing with. To me they were just an extension of little things I'd seen in great detail and dealt with with some success." As we also learnt at Sir Charles' memorial service, during these years, despite the long and intensely productive hours he devoted to his portfolios, he would leave Parliament each evening to return home to dinner, where politics would be laid aside and full attention given to his family of five boys.

When the Brand government was defeated in 1971, Charles Court resisted any temptation to resume what would have been a successful business career, and was unanimously elected leader of the Liberal Party when Sir David Brand stepped down in June 1972—almost to the day that he received his knighthood. He was a vigorous

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opposition leader who rallied a defeated party by focusing on the difficulties of the state government at the 1972 federal election in Western Australia, where the Liberal vote went against the national tide. Thanks to a hard-fought win at the 1974 election, the coalition was back in office after only one term in opposition. Among the Liberal Party's wins in 1974 were the seats of Gascoyne and Pilbara, and an absolute majority in the Legislative Council was achieved for the first time in generations. These gains were held at the two subsequent elections, with a then record share of seats and votes for the coalition at the 1977 election. In 1980 Sir Charles won a third term, with the loss of only one Legislative Assembly seat. He was the most electorally successful conservative leader, and the only such long-term leader of the twentieth century not to suffer an election defeat. Strong challenges had to be faced down, with a temporary rupture of the coalition in 1975, and confrontations with centralising federal governments. As Premier, Sir Charles Court continued to deliver strong resource-based development in a more uncertain economic and political climate than that of the 1960s, with the foundations laid both for the North West Shelf gas project and for the retention of royalties for the state of Western Australia. His eight years as Premier also saw the expansion of social infrastructure, with the founding of Murdoch University, with its superb veterinary school, the refurbishment of His Majesty's Theatre and the building of the new Art Gallery of Western Australia.

After his retirement in 1982, Sir Charles spent 25 years in energetic and selfless retirement. He declined offers of senior directorships so that he could contribute his experienced advice to any company that might continue the building of Western Australia. His son Ken spoke at his memorial service of his continued involvement in the promotion of international trade through the Australia-Taiwan Business Council. His record of awards and life memberships speaks for itself, but Sir Charles never contented himself simply with receiving honours, no matter that they were so well-deserved. He kept pushing himself to remain an active contributor to all those organisations that honoured him. It could be said that, over these years, Sir Charles not so much outlived his political opponents as outlived the partisan rancour that accompanies active politics. He enjoyed a great and deserved respect from across the political spectrum. He was made a life member of the Western Australian division of the Liberal Party in 1988, and 10 years later, at the Liberal Party national convention, he was given the outstanding service award, reserved for iconic national figures. A new generation of Liberals was to remember him not just for his magnificent service in office, but also as an inspirational speaker and as the quintessential loyal party member who, aged 89, was out campaigning in shopping centres in the seat of Nedlands in the difficult 2001 state election. Those attending his ninety-fifth birthday celebrations in 2006 were treated to not only a strong and informative speech, but also the spectacle of him once more conducting a band.

Sir Charles was a life member of the Returned and Services League from 1981, the Musicians' Union from 1953, and the Calabrese Association. To give just one example of the extent and nature of his community involvement, at the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society in 2000, as its patron, he delivered a speech of firm practical advice and some fresh evaluation of Sullivan's music. When he asked in 2006 to be relieved of this role, he was begged to remain as patron emeritus.

Sir Charles Court was above all a man of deep religious faith with absolute commitment to his family. It was very much in character that, the day after he was elected Premier in 1974, he chopped firewood for his 87-year-old mother. Sir Charles Court was also a man with a tremendous sense of what was right and proper. I am reminded that last year, on the passing of Dick Old—who was in and out of coalition with Sir Charles in this house—Sir Charles, from his sickbed, asked his son Richard to contact me as a local member of Parliament and pass on his request in his unique, firm way that I attend the funeral of the late Dick Old on his behalf and pass on his respects to his family. He was, as I said, a man with a tremendous sense of what is proper and right.

Often it seems that the children, and especially the sons, of great men fall far short of the father's talent and character—some would argue that Sir Winston Churchill's son, Randolph, was a case in point—but Sir Charles had every reason to be proud of his five sons and their families. Not only Richard, who followed his father as member for Nedlands and later as Premier, but Victor, Barry, Ken and Geoffrey are all notable achievers who spoke with great dignity at his memorial service. To Lady Court and to Sir Charles' sons, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, we extend our sympathy and our thanks.

**MR B.J. GRYLLS (Merredin — Leader of the National Party)** [12.27 pm]: On behalf of the Nationals, I support the remarks of the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. I pay tribute to Sir Charles Court's passion for regional Western Australia and to his vision, which today, 25 years after his retirement from this place, enables Western Australia to enjoy unprecedented wealth and opportunity. As Minister for Industrial Development, Railways and the North-West in the Brand government, he laid the foundation for today's mining boom. He recognised early on the great potential of the Pilbara, and took a number of landmark steps to ensure that it became the engine room of our economy. He opened up the region for exploration, lobbied Canberra to lift

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the ban on iron ore exports, and had the foresight to develop markets in Asia. It undoubtedly fulfils Sir Charles' vision that Western Australia is now the economic powerhouse of the nation.

Every member of Parliament enters this place hoping to make a difference. Sir Charles made more than a difference. He is remembered along with Sir John Forrest as one of our two greatest political leaders. More than that, he was a great family man, which could not be evidenced more than by the touching tributes paid to him by his grandchildren at the memorial service that so many of us attended. All of us, no matter which side of the chamber we sit on, hope that we can bring to the Parliament a small part of what Sir Charles brought to it and so make Western Australia a greater place than it was when we took office. The Nationals pay tribute to Sir Charles and we offer our sincere sympathy to his family.

**MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont — Deputy Premier)** [12.28 pm]: In 1974, when Sir Charles Court became Premier, I was a young political activist fiercely opposed to many of his positions. In fact, I marched to the steps of this building in protest against his proposed Fuel, Energy and Power Resources Act 1972. Later, as energy minister, I was forced to contemplate the remote chance that that legislation might have to be invoked in certain circumstances. However, today is a time to put aside the commitment we all bring to the conduct of political affairs and to recognise without partisanship the contribution to our state of Sir Charles Court. There can be no question that Western Australia owes Sir Charles a debt of gratitude. Much of the resources boom we enjoy today was founded on his vision, ingenuity, shrewdness and persistence. In my role as Minister for State Development, I will confine my comments about him today largely to the field of resources development, particularly in the north of the state.

In measuring Sir Charles Court's contribution, it is important to view him in the context of his times. When he set out on his crusade to develop the state's natural resources, Western Australia was known beyond its borders only as a gold producer. Even the gold industry was near death after being squeezed for decades between rising costs and a fixed price. For generations, people had known about the mountain ranges in the Pilbara that went rusty when it rained. It was obvious that they consisted of iron ore of exceptional richness. However, there were no towns, railways, roads, ports or populations to enable the iron ore to be mined, and neither was there a market. It was Charles Court's special gift to perceive how a market might be created. Japan and Germany had been devastated by war. They would need vast amounts of steel to rebuild their cities, infrastructure and their economies. If they, especially Japan, could be persuaded to develop their steel industries in a particular way and to commit themselves, in a binding manner, to purchase Pilbara iron ore, it might just be possible to get developments off the ground. He saw how two simple innovations—the long-term contract and the legislated state agreement, both at that time unknown in the minerals trade—could become the key to unlocking the Pilbara's future. With long-term sales contracts as security, mining companies could approach the world's financial markets for the money to build mines, towns, railways, ports and roads. With state agreements setting out the rights and obligations of the developers in the state, financiers would have the comfort of seeing projects that were backed by the force of law. At some stage, we might judge that the era of state agreements is over, but they were appropriate and crucial at that time. Charles Court trod a frequent path to Tokyo and the investment capitals of London and New York, gradually winning converts and contacts. The rest, as the saying goes, is history.

In just a few years this state rocketed from being a backwater to one of the world's most important suppliers of key minerals, because nickel, bauxite and mineral sands developments on a global scale followed hard on the heels of iron ore. Gas was not far behind them.

Charles Court was sometimes accused of being in the pocket of multinational companies, but he went to extraordinary lengths to get Australian companies into controlling positions in the resources industries. He manoeuvred with skill and persistence, even, as some of us put it, with polite brutality, to get companies such as BHP and CRA, as they were named then, and Woodside into the leadership positions that they hold today. He was determined to ensure a powerful voice for Australia's interests in decision making within the great business ventures of which they were part. We should bear in mind that what we take for granted today was a leap into the unknown in those days. When the great Pilbara developments were getting underway, there was not a chemist shop north of Carnarvon and there was not a hairdresser between Geraldton and Broome and then not another one until Darwin. The sealed road north from Perth ended at Northampton. After that the road was a dust track between the wrecks of a multitude of cars and trucks. Port Hedland was a ramshackle sheep port with a rickety wooden jetty. Dampier, now one of the world's busiest ports in terms of tonnage, did not exist, nor did Karratha, Wickham, Newman, Tom Price, Paraburdoo or Pannawonica, now home to tens of thousands of our citizens. Mount Nameless had not at that time been given its name.

Today, one of the busiest industries in the Pilbara and the Kimberley is tourism. The caravan convoys of grey nomads and the thousands of others who multiply the population of the north west between May and November

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each year do so on magnificent highways made possible by the mineral and energy developments. They pour hundreds of millions of dollars annually into local economies, sustaining jobs and thus communities. For all of that, we should, and we do, give generous credit to Sir Charles. One of his favourite sayings was, "You can't help anyone else if you've got the seat out of your own trousers." As he did not come from a wealthy family, he understood the value of a thriving economy to the entire community.

In his latter years, Charles Court was once asked what he regarded as his most important achievement. I am advised that, without hesitation, he answered, "Welshpool." When his astonished questioner asked why, he said it was because of the hundreds of businesses that have been established there to service the mining and energy industries, many of them by former tradesmen in those industries who had spotted a niche for their own abilities and energy. He understood that the real pay-off in terms of employment from the mining boom was not in the mines, for modern mining is machine rather than labour intensive. The bulk of jobs were in places like Welshpool, Kewdale and Belmont, which I am proud to represent, with their street after street of repair and maintenance shops, their equipment and parts yards, their suites of professional services and the delis, lunch bars and other support facilities that mushroomed around them.

Whether it is what he would have preferred, it is the development of northern WA for which Sir Charles Court will be most remembered, and properly so. When he started out, the vast area north of Geraldton was a very different region in scale and importance to the nation. Now it is a region of great and growing importance to Australia's and the world's economic progress. Two generations of Japanese and South Koreans have grown up in rising affluence, in significant part, because of the economic growth built on the bounty of WA's north. A generation of Chinese people is now following the same path to a better future. It is a remarkable legacy that Sir Charles Court has left behind him; it is the legacy that this government is building on.

Charles Court was a strong defender of Australia's status as a federation and of Western Australia's position in that Federation. Even far into his retirement he assisted me by making a submission to Ross Garnaut's 2002 inquiry into federal-state financial arrangements. He was determined, as all of us still are, that Western Australia should retain a fairer share of the rewards of the economic development that he promoted.

Earlier, I briefly mentioned Sir Charles' family background. That background contained a strong Labor Party element. It is intriguing to think that if he had followed that political path instead of the one he chose, he would be today one of the Labor Party's most honoured heroes. In the final analysis, however, which party he joined matters far less than what he did for his community.

With my personal condolences to his family, I commend this motion to the house.

**DR K.D. HAMES (Dawesville — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [12.37 pm]: It is a great honour for me to take this opportunity to make a brief contribution to this condolence motion honouring Sir Charles Court. I would like to, perhaps in a lighter way, talk about some of the things that he achieved. In fact, my presence in this Parliament as a Liberal member is owed totally to Sir Charles Court. My grandmother tells the story that my grandfather was the secretary of the police union in Fremantle, but retired from the police force to become a butcher in Derby. At the time the Labor Party first won that seat, the Labor Party asked my grandfather to run as a candidate, as my grandmother tells the story, and he declined and said, "I'm sorry, I'm a Liberal supporter." That raised the question—how could he be a Liberal supporter when he was a member of the police union? In the same way that Sir Charles was patriarch of his family, my grandmother was matriarch of her family. When she said we were Liberal, we were Liberal. The reason we were Liberal is that as a 16-year-old she attended regular Friday night musical evenings that Sir Charles also attended. Even in the days leading up to his death, Sir Charles remembered well my grandmother and those circumstances. That tells members something that is already well known; that is, his prodigious memory of people and places he visited. He remembered not only the big issues in which he was involved, but also the little things. So many times in the community I have met individuals who have said Sir Charles was known to them as the patron of their community group. As he aged, he attended the functions held by those organisations and talked to people. He remembered their names, circumstances and issues from so many years before. He was an amazing man.

The music that Sir Charles was involved in at a young stage of his life became his passion throughout his life. He was such a strong supporter, not only of the development of this state, which we have already heard, but also of the arts, culture and music.

The great support he gave to organisations involved in those activities was an enormous credit to him. We saw the great performances that were put on in his honour at his memorial service at the university. It amazed me to hear from Sir Charles' sons at that memorial that he had in fact organised his own service. I think it was Richard who said that the family was told, "There will be a state service, and of course this is what you must do, these are

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the people you must invite and this is the music I want to hear.” I have to say that it got me planning for my own service in the future so that I am just as well organised as was Sir Charles Court!

We in this state owe a great debt to Sir Charles, particularly for what he did in developing the north west. I refer to not only the developments that have stood us in such good stead ever since, but also the royalty deals he negotiated. When Richard Court was the Premier of this state, the government met some criticism about the money it spent, the money it did not spend and at times its inability to support certain programs. We must acknowledge that things were tough during those times. Western Australia had just been through the South East Asian financial meltdown, which had a significant effect on the income of this state and its ability to fund much needed community programs. It was the strength of the economy that had been driven by Sir Charles in developing the North West Shelf that allowed us not only to survive, but also to progress so very well. At that stage the unemployment rate in Western Australia was the lowest of any state of Australia. We were therefore able to get through those difficult times. I believe that the legacy Sir Charles left to us with the royalty stream has resulted in the great boom that Western Australia—and Australia—is experiencing today; it all goes back to the legacy of Sir Charles Court.

It is interesting to note that I had a meeting this morning with a government official and because I was early I got to use Sir Charles’ famous quote. How early was I? I was 10 minutes early. As Sir Charles always said, “If you are not 10 minutes early, you are late.”

I say to Sir Charles’ family—his wife, his children and his grandchildren—that I know how proud you must all be of his wonderful achievements. Australia—Western Australia in particular—is equally proud.

**MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine)** [12.42 pm]: I rise to say a few words about the passing of Sir Charles. In doing so, on behalf of my wife and my two children—I will make that clear in a moment—I express my deepest sympathy to the Court family and to Lady Judith.

Regardless of one’s political persuasions, certain individuals pass through the parliamentary system who I believe epitomise the standards that the community expects and that the parliamentary system demands. I believe Sir Charles was such an individual. I know that he was a fierce political campaigner. I did not always agree with him. One area of disagreement, I recall, was as a young police officer arguing with him over the Noonkanbah incident, when a convoy was taken there, but that is another story.

We have heard much today about Sir Charles’ big achievements, but I want to relate one small incident that occurred when I was a young police officer that I believe highlights his statesmanship. Even though he served at the highest level, he was still able to identify with the ordinary person in the street, as the member for Dawesville touched on—a mark, as I said, of a true statesman. My first association with Sir Charles Court was when I was a young detective and part of a team that was tasked with investigating the attempted bombing of the former Department of Labour and National Service, an incident that has been mentioned on a few occasions in this house. It occurred during the contentious days of the Vietnam War and was the first major terrorist incident that had ever occurred in our city; it shocked the city greatly. A well-constructed bomb was found and disarmed, thankfully, before it exploded, and subsequently two offenders were arrested and convicted in relation to that device. The device was very similar to those used in the Bali bombings. Subsequent to the conviction of the offenders, supporters of the bombers commenced a terror campaign against my wife and my two children. The campaign was well publicised, and even to this day it has affected both Susan and my kids; it comes back from time to time. They had to move out of their family home. I suppose it is ironic that some of the supporters of that campaign are now perhaps more well known in the community. Sir Charles, as I recall at that time, was either Leader of the Opposition and about to become Premier or was already Premier of the state. I was a lowly detective in my office in James Street and I answered a call on my phone. The caller said, “Sir Charles Court here.” I said, “Yeah, sure.” I looked around the office to see who was pulling my leg and the voice said, “Sir Charles Court here. I want you to come up to Parliament House for lunch with me.” I then started to realise that it was not a joke and it actually was Sir Charles Court. Even in those days his stature in this state was enormous. “By the way”, he said, “you had better go upstairs and tell Weddie and Leachie that you’re coming up to Parliament House, otherwise you’ll be in strife.” I went up to the commissioner’s office, who I think at that time was Athol Wedd. His offsider was Owen Leach, who later went on to become one of the best commissioners the state has ever had. They had obviously received the same call, because after a stern lecture from both of them on how I should conduct myself and how to know my place when I went to Parliament House, I was dispatched, I think with Athol Wedd’s driver, to Parliament House. In those days one was very aware of protocols. I was met on the steps of Parliament House by the late Andrew Mensaros, who took me for the very first time into the members’ dining hall of Parliament House, a place I have since come to know very well. Shortly afterwards, we were joined by Sir Charles Court for lunch. Members can imagine the trepidation I felt. I was waiting to hear the

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usual comment—there is a term for it but I will not say it! He did not want to know about the case; he was obviously well briefed on it. Instead, he wanted to know about my wife and my children and how the events that were happening to them were affecting them. He showed a deep and a genuine concern. He also thanked me for the service that he felt I had done for the state in bringing people to justice. He then amazingly proceeded to offer my wife, my kids and me a holiday anywhere outside of the metropolitan area so I could take them away from the campaign that was being waged against them—not against me, but against Susan, Tim and Joanne. I was amazed that this man, who was then at the pinnacle of his success, would go to such lengths; firstly, to support me as a young police officer and to recognise the role of coppers in the community, and secondly and more importantly, to show his recognition of the family and children of a police officer. He pointed out to me the amount of support that he felt they needed, which was an obvious reflection of the great love he had for his own family. I have never forgotten that. It set him aside as a politician and a statesman. I look around now at the current crop of political leaders and at myself and often wonder what their or my reaction would have been at that time.

Over the years our paths crossed regularly. I have been around government for 43 years of service now, both through the pathway of my police career and through my parliamentary role. I constantly came across Sir Charles in the various roles he undertook, particularly after he retired. I was involved with him very largely in the organisations that supported pensioners and older persons in aged care etc—the Pensioners League as it was then called. His enthusiasm and absolute capacity for work in the organisations that I was involved with is legendary. Even in the last few years of his life he was always forthcoming with advice. I must say that he was one of the first people to phone and congratulate me when I was elected to this house. Even though in the previous seven years we were always of different political persuasions, he always pointed out to me that he was proud to see that I had moved on in service to serve the state. He always thought, and I think Richard heard, that I should have been on the other side. Every time we met him he was impeccable in the way he acknowledged my wife and my children and remembered that incident. It was amazing to me that a man of his stature, who had done so much for the state and who had worked at such high levels, should do that. As I do, I believe that he remembered that time when he made a very lowly detective constable and his family feel so truly valued. That is a lesson for all leaders and all people who aspire to be leaders.

We sat with him one day at one of those famous, interminable Chinese-Taiwanese dinners when he won the raffle. It was not because he was sitting with us! He won an enormous Chinese urn. I would be interested to know whether the Court family still has it. He was absolutely horrified, but being the true gentleman that he was, he accepted it in the spirit in which it was given, except he got Susan and me to carry it out for him because at the time he was not quite strong enough. I can always remember him muttering that he hoped we would drop it on the way out. I am not sure if it ever went to his home, because it was the most hideous thing, but he accepted it.

One of the last long conversations I had with Sir Charles was shortly after I resigned from my ministry in this place. He was very complimentary about what he thought were the standards I had applied when resigning at that time. He was never backward at giving advice. He expressed to me his views at that time at what he saw as the importance in political life of loyalty to one's own party, of integrity and of setting the standards of morality that the community expects.

Again I express, if I may, my deepest condolences to Lady Judith Court, to Victor, Barry, Ken and Richard who are here today, and in fact the entire Court family. In doing so, may I finish with a quote from John Wesley, which I think really essentially sums up my view, my family's view and the community's view of Sir Charles —

Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can.

Vale, Sir Charles Court.

**MR C.J. BARNETT (Cottesloe)** [12.54 pm]: First, from Lyn and myself, may I extend my condolences to Lady Court and to each of Sir Charles' sons, Ken, Victor, Barry, Geoff and Richard. Sir Charles Court excelled in all that he did: he excelled as a father; he excelled in music, business and military service; and he excelled, perhaps most of all, as a member of Parliament, as a senior minister and as a Premier. Sir Charles, as members are aware, was a member of this house for 29 years. If one talks to members who served with him, he dominated



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this chamber in a way that perhaps no other politician ever has. He rightly stands alongside John Forrest as one of the two great Premiers of Western Australia. They rightly stand beside James Stirling and John Curtin as the four great public figures in this state's history.

I got to know Sir Charles Court before I knew Richard, which was during my time at the Chamber of Commerce, when I worked closely with Ken Court and got to know Sir Charles on a number of Chamber of Commerce and related issues.

As it turned out, I subsequently became Minister for Resource Development, and during the eight years in which I held that portfolio, essentially Sir Charles' portfolio for which he is most famous, there were many conferences on mining, resources and oil and gas, as there are today. More times than not, if I was speaking at those conferences, when I got to the podium and looked over its edge, sitting in front of me would be Sir Charles Court. I was never quite sure whether that was encouragement or intimidation, but I was always very conscious of Sir Charles Court sitting in front of me, watching and listening to everything I said, sometimes shaking his head and sometimes nodding.

Sir Charles Court made an enormous contribution to Western Australia and to this country. That has been spoken about already. The development of the Pilbara iron ore industry from the mid 1960s, which I believe was Sir Charles' greatest achievement for economic development, was extraordinary for the scale of the development, as the Deputy Premier outlined; the fact that there was virtually nothing in the Pilbara before and it was a change that transformed not only the Pilbara but also Western Australia. Western Australia had not been important since the 1890s during the gold rush. In the 1960s Western Australia again became important, not only nationally but also internationally. It was because of the development of the Pilbara iron ore industry. It was also extraordinary in the sense that the development of the iron ore industry was related to the reconstruction of Japan and the take-or-pay commitments of Japanese steel mills to buy iron ore and the investment of the Japanese trading houses in the major new iron ore projects. Remember, and I am sure that many of us do, just 20 years earlier Australia and Japan had been at war. Just 20 years earlier Darwin and northern towns in Western Australia had been bombed. I can remember as a young high school student at the time the sensitivity in the community because we were now embracing a new economic, trade and cultural relationship with Japan. Sir Charles Court managed that sensitivity. I can remember my parents being very concerned about it. My father had served in the war. He did not have a sense of warmth towards the Japanese in the mid-1960s, yet he was convinced by the way Sir Charles Court presented it as an opportunity for the future and became a supporter, as did thousands of other ex-servicemen. That was an extraordinary achievement in itself. The development of the Pilbara changed the state and changed the nation.

The other great economic achievement was, of course, the North West Shelf project, which to this day stands as Australia's greatest ever and most significant single industrial development. It was a mind-boggling project for the technology and the knowledge of the day. The gas was in deep water, well out from the coast, with no obvious market. It was always a difficult project for those who invested directly in it. Technically it was difficult, politically it was difficult and financially it was a real challenge. Sir Charles Court displayed what, frankly, we could do with more of today: some genuine big thinking, some leadership and courage. There were two risk aspects to that project. The first was the construction of the Dampier to Bunbury natural gas pipeline, which even then had a capital cost of over \$1 billion. It was an extraordinary undertaking for a still fairly small and fairly weak Western Australian economy. The second, and perhaps less understood, was the take-or-pay commitment to purchase gas, to take 414 terajoules of gas, whether or not it could be on-sold, and a commitment to pay whether it could be used or not. When I was minister responsible for iron ore, and particularly the North West Shelf project, with the two great achievements of Sir Charles Court, I sold the pipeline and I broke the take-or-pay contracts into smaller contracts. Perhaps that explains why Sir Charles Court sometimes gave me that strange, quizzical look when he saw me. He may not have appreciated it! However, the development had moved on, and I am sure that he recognised that that was the nature of the development; that it would mature and change. I think he would be aghast if he were here today in this chamber where he spent 29 years if he saw how meekly Western Australia is handing over control of the development of the north of this state and its great resources and mining and gas industries effectively to Canberra and to others. He would not appreciate that. I think he would be on his feet in this chamber ranting and raving articulately about the future of the state and the need to think big and take responsibility for our own destiny.

Sir Charles Court was a great man in all that he did. As I said at the beginning, he excelled in everything he did. In every sense he was a great Western Australian and a great Australian.

**MS A.J.G. MacTIERNAN (Armada — Minister for Planning and Infrastructure)** [1.00 pm]: I want to add a small contribution and recognise the role that Sir Charles Court has played in Western Australia's history. Excellent presentations have been given in this place today setting out the extraordinary life of this man. I

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particularly note the comments of the Deputy Premier, who made us realise what this state was like in the 1950s and the degree and nature of the changes that took place over the following 10 years. It was not until I was in my current job that I had any appreciation of how hard it was to get the federal government to give attention to the needs and potentialities of Western Australia. That is a major hurdle that I have experienced during my time in government. I can only imagine how much more difficult it would have been in the 1950s when Western Australia was very much the Cinderella state.

We need to pay testament to the contribution that Sir Charles made, with a number of other people, to get the federal government of the day to stand up and take notice and to be prepared to see the great potentialities of the state. I only became aware of the level of disinterest from the federal government when researching some history as background to an address I was giving to a conference. We always thought that the federal government did not realise that there was iron ore in Western Australia. In fact, the federal government was well aware that there was iron ore in Western Australia. In the mid to late 1930s, when the Japanese wanted to acquire an interest in an iron ore mine in Western Australia, the then federal government found itself in a very difficult position. We were not at war with Japan but there was clearly concern within the community about trading with Japan because of what was going on in China. The chief geologist set down the reports of iron ore in Western Australia. The figures of known iron ore in Western Australia were revised down so that it could be said, "Sorry, we can't allow exports here because we will not have enough to cope for our own needs." That is a fair enough position to take. It is extraordinary that after the end of the war, it took 14 to 15 years to reverse that position. We need to understand the scope and scale of that task that required Western Australians to see the potential of WA and to get the federal government to reverse the ban on iron ore, which had been keeping Western Australia as a disadvantaged state. I want to put on record my great appreciation for the role that Sir Charles played in taking on that task and achieving the outcome that has been set out here today that has underpinned the great growth in Western Australia.

To Richard, Barry and the rest of the family, my condolence on your loss. You must be very proud of your father and what he has done.

**MR P.D. OMODEI (Warren-Blackwood)** [1.04 pm]: I rise to join my colleagues, the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in eulogising Sir Charles Court. Sir Charles Court was a great Western Australian. We all recognise that. The people of Western Australia owe him a debt of gratitude for his significant contribution to the state. I had my own personal connections with Sir Charles Court. He launched my first campaign in Manjimup in 1985. It was a very strong Labor seat. Sir Charles came down and spoke for an hour. We could have heard a pin drop. I went on to become a member of Parliament at the next election. Over the years I got to know him well. I always received his advice with gratitude. He told me stories about his time as deputy to Sir David Brand. In 1959 he wrote the whole Liberal policy with the blessing of Sir David. As Minister for Industrial Development, Railways and the North-West, we all know the major events he presided over and the discussions and negotiations that took place around that time.

I agree with my colleagues that there is no doubt that he and Sir John Forrest were significant contributors to the future of Western Australia. We owe them a debt of gratitude for the lifestyle that we live today, which is the result of their great vision and energy. Sir Charles was a character. He was a tall man and he had great presence, piercing eyes and a great vitality. When one met him, one was left with no doubt what the meeting was about. In more recent times when I was the newly appointed Leader of the Opposition, I received a letter from Sir Charles offering his assistance. Knowing what a stickler he was for protocol, I wrote back to him the same day. We met within a week or so. He told me a number of things. Firstly, he said we always had to treat those dastardly people from the eastern states with great caution. Obviously, he was a great state rights man, as I am. We had a great deal in common. When dealing with these industrial giants—miners and so on—he said that we had one opportunity when miners applied for a mineral exploration and mining lease. He said that there was a time to negotiate and that if we were not successful in that very small window of time, once they got their mining lease, they would treat the government with disdain. He left me in no uncertain terms about what we should be doing. As was mentioned, the north west of Western Australia was virtually a desert. He negotiated with those mining companies. The new towns that appeared dotted around the north west of our state were due to his intuition and vision for the state.

Sir Charles Court regaled me with stories. One went back to the surrender at Bougainville, when a very small group of Australian soldiers took the surrender of a large number of Japanese. During a critical stage in the negotiation for north west iron ore in particular, when matters were becoming complicated, Sir Charles was at home very early one morning when he heard a knock on the door. The person who was knocking on the door was the same fellow he had received the surrender from. I understand that from that time on, negotiations improved.

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As far as other issues are concerned, the Edgleys were going to sell His Majesty's Theatre because it was deteriorating and they wanted to realise the asset. Sir Charles Court saved His Majesty's Theatre. He also built the Art Gallery of Western Australia.

I agree with the sentiment that something of significance should be built to commemorate Sir Charles Court's contribution to the state. It goes without saying that a statue should be erected. There could be a resources development memory to Sir Charles Court, such as a resources hub, or it could be something to do with His Majesty's, music and the performing arts, which were his great passion. I was very fortunate in my initial meeting with him to talk about all the things that related to federal and state relations, because I had the same portfolio as he did, and resources development. About three-quarters of the way through our meeting, he started going over some issues a couple of times. He said to me, "I hope you don't think I'm repeating these things because I'm old. I'm repeating them so that they actually sink in." At the end of the meeting, I said that I was really appreciative of his coming to talk to me and giving me his advice, and that I would like to catch up with him a couple of times in the year if he could do that. He said, "I'm available every month if you need me." That was the kind of person that Sir Charles was.

Sir Charles had an early career in accounting. Going way back, he was involved in the Kauri Timber Company. He touched everybody's lives in almost every facet of life, including the ethnic communities, where he was a cavaliero of the Italian community. If Sir Charles was at a function, or even if Richard was there when he became Premier, the whispers could be heard around the room that it was Sir Charles or it was Richard. To some extent, Richard had one up on Sir Charles, in that he was the Premier of the state for a couple of weeks longer than his father. I think Sir Charles would have been very proud of that achievement. The Court family are a very proud Western Australian family, and the people of WA owe them much.

It has been a privilege to make a contribution to the condolence for Sir Charles Court. I knew him well. He made a great contribution to this state, and his whole family can be very proud of his achievements.

**MRS C.A. MARTIN (Kimberley)** [1.10 pm]: I add my support to the motion, and I will contribute a few comments. The first of those is to extend my deepest, deepest sympathy to the Court family.

The loss of a patriarch is a profound thing. It reshuffles families. In the case of Sir Charles Court, it has reshuffled a lot of other things which are about being Western Australian. A lot of Western Australians benefit from Sir Charles' legacy. I also acknowledge the loss of Sir Charles Court to the Liberal Party.

His legacy will remain, though. His sons have actually stepped up to the plate and taken their place in public life and made their contributions, and continue to do so. I must say that Sir Charles Court did a brilliant job as a father, because they are brilliant people, and I have worked with some of them. The oil industry, the petroleum industry, the gas industry, the iron ore industry, and other industries have sprouted from their work. They are all about his vision. The only other government that has provided something close to that magnitude, of course, is the Labor government. It is really important that that work be continued.

Sir Charles Court said two things to me when he offered me some advice at one stage. He said, "Don't let this system change you." I do not think I have changed much—it is inevitable though! The other things he said to me was, "Don't give up on the Ord", which I thought was really good advice.

I first heard Sir Charles Court's name when I was 19. I was lying on a road during the Noonkanbah dispute. It was the Great Northern Highway, about 12 kilometres south of the Shay Gap turn-off. I think a copper was picking me up by the hair and chucking me in a paddy wagon! I must say that when I first heard his name, I thought he might have horns, but that certainly was not the case. The Noonkanbah dispute had two profound results in my life: the first was that it made me an Aboriginal activist, which was a pretty good result, and also, of course, it gave me the desire to speak out about things that I thought were wrong. I thank Sir Charles Court for that, even though it was inadvertent. The second result, of course, is the Kimberley Land Council, which was formed as a direct result of the Noonkanbah dispute. Inadvertently, two of the most profound impacts on my life came from the actions of this man.

The one project that Sir Charles Court started that must be finished is the Ord irrigation scheme—not just because it is in my electorate, not just because it started and we should finish it, but because it is the right thing to do. It is an opportunity that this man saw many years ago. His vision was formed well before its time. I did not agree with what he said about Cape Croydon—I do not think nuclear devices should be used to make a deep hole for a deep water port. However, as to the beneficiaries of this man's vision, everyone above the 26<sup>th</sup> parallel can take their hats off to him. Most people who live in the north west have benefited from his legacy.

Western Australia has a dynasty of brilliant men who have contributed and will continue to contribute to this community—they are on the other side of the political fence, which is a bit of a worry, but they are there, and

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there must be diversity in a society like ours. I commend those men and I commend Sir Charles Court for his vision. It has been a privilege to speak on this condolence motion. On behalf of the people of the north west, I extend our deepest sympathies to his family.

**MS S.E. WALKER (Nedlands)** [1.15 pm]: Much has been said of Sir Charles' distinguished political achievements, but I will say something about him as a human being and his personal life, because it will add a new dimension to who he was. I will say something about his first wife of 56 years, Lady Rita Court, whom I knew through my membership, when I was about 30 years old, of the Dalkeith women's section of the Liberal Party.

Additionally, Sir Charles Court was my local member, firstly, in 1973 when I was 22 and lived at 33 Davies Road, Dalkeith; secondly, in 1978, when I lived at 27 Hillway, Nedlands; and thirdly, when I lived at 50 Alexander Road, Dalkeith. I distinctly remember one sunny afternoon, when I was about 30 years of age, walking down from my home, a few houses to the Blair Room at St Lawrence's Church in Dalkeith, and into the most formidable group of women anyone would ever be likely to come across. They were formidable because they had a very high intellect and were very competent and confident. One of those was Lady Court. I remember her for three reasons. Firstly—and I say this in the nicest way, because I want to come to her qualities, which have always been outstanding to me. It did not matter who was president, because she ran the show. She could because she was the wife of the Premier, but she did not have to. My memories of her are that she was always organising functions for Sir Charles when he was then Premier, and selling raffle tickets.

I will talk about her, because for many years her great work for the Liberal Party—and for Sir Charles—has never been mentioned. One of his greatest achievements was that he was very happily married to Lady Rita for 56 years. In his autobiography, *Charles Court: the early years: An Autobiography*, he states that his wedding day was one of momentous joy for him. I hope his sons, who are sitting at the back, do not mind me talking about their mother, whose qualities they know very well. I will put on record that to the women in Dalkeith, she was very much part of Sir Charles' time as a local member. She was not dissimilar, of course, to Marjorie Rocher, who enthusiastically encouraged women like me to further their education and enter politics.

Before I come to what Sir Charles said about his wife, which really has not had much public airing, I will describe how I viewed her as a person. She was a handsome woman. She was kind, approachable, totally unassuming, very diplomatic, charming, and had a very wise countenance. I thought her contribution would go unnoticed because she died in 1992, until a couple of years ago when I read the dedication by Sir Charles in his autobiography. The dedication made me view him in a very different way. The eulogies today have all been about his achievements economically and for the state, but I would like to read what Sir Charles said about his wife, because it is absolutely true. The dedication states —

There is only one person to whom this book could be dedicated and that is my late wife, Rita.

Only our immediate family knows the contribution she made to my life and to my career during the whole of the fifty-six years we were happily married, up to the time of her death on 18 October 1992.

The dedication then goes on to list the many careers he had. The dedication further states —

... her quiet, wise and unquestioning loyalty was a source of constant inspiration. It was by far the greatest strength I had during the whole of that time.

...

I have never known anyone ...

and this is so true —

... to have such a far-reaching influence, but appear to do so little about it in an assertive way. She accomplished the greatest asset that any person in public life can have, namely, serenity at home.

Sir Charles' dedication goes on to state that his book, *Charles Court: the early years: an autobiography*, is a very simple book about his life until his entry into Parliament, and states that if anyone looks through the papers at the Battye Library and writes a book about his years in Parliament —

... any successes that may then become apparent should also be dedicated to Rita, without whom little would have been achieved.

I say that not to detract from his achievements, but to say that it is absolutely true—his boys would know that it is absolutely true. His boys also know that in his book, *Charles Court: the early years: an autobiography*, if one reads it closely, there is a very candid overview of her attributes. I am just very proud and privileged to reach

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back in time, if we like, to 1981 when I first met Lady Court. Over the years, I thought she was a wonderful woman and had never received that recognition. I was thrilled to read that dedication in Sir Charles' book.

I would like to extend my sincerest condolences to his children, Lady Judy and all their extended family.

**MR M.W. TRENORDEN (Avon)** [1.20 pm]: The first time I had any close contact with Sir Charles Court was as an insurance agent some time in the seventies. I want to refer to this occasion because it epitomises what is happening now. It took place in an auditorium in Western Australia with some 500 people there, and the room was pitch black. I walked the guest speaker of the day, Sir Charles Court, in a single spotlight to the theme from *Star Wars*. It was a remarkable event and I was just taken by this theatre created by the insurance industry. Then Sir Charles took the stage. He was unaffected by that event. I would have found it overwhelming to have that sort of focus, but away he went and spoke brilliantly, as those of us who knew him know he could.

I am very impressed about the way the people of Western Australia and to some degree the way the people of Australia generally have reacted to his death. I think it is of great credit to Western Australians, members opposite and a whole raft of people who had clashes with Sir Charles during his life to recognise what a brilliant person he was and the contribution he, as one individual, made to us all. There is not a single Western Australian who should not be grateful for the service of Sir Charles Court—that is, service in the real meaning of the word.

In our lives, very few people of consequence drift past us. When we think about it, we could go through a state like Western Australia and see many remarkable people but not people of real consequence. I support the Premier and the plans for the statue. Personally, I think that is the best outcome. I will never argue about where the statue should be or what it should look like or any of those matters, but I believe that a statue in terms of our culture and history is the appropriate response. I look forward to seeing what Richard and others come up with in that context.

Only a few days ago, I was in Beverley, which was celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of its water supply by Sir John Forrest. I was unthinking enough to say two great Western Australians were involved—Sir John Forrest, who has been mentioned several times today, and C.Y. O'Connor. Several people came out of the audience to say, "What about Sir Charles Court?" I immediately recognised that oversight. I am an amateur historian; I love history. There is always that question: how soon after a person's life does he become an icon, a giant? I am happy to stand behind the Premier's description of Sir Charles Court as a giant. It is appropriate.

Sir Charles Court and Lady Rita Court attended a meeting that I had called in Northam as the chairman of the local chamber of commerce. The member for Cottesloe was the director of the Western Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the time, and we were trying to do wonderful things in the community. Sir Charles Court came to Northam on what can be described only as a stinking hot February night, before air conditioning was common in our public buildings, and spent the night with us. I will tell Richard what his mother asked me: "How do you live in this climate? It's terrible." I said that being a young father, I had bought my children a trampoline and I would take a sheet and a blanket and sleep on the trampoline on the lawn. I will not tell Richard now what she asked me about what I did on the trampoline, but I will tell him later. His mother was a remarkable person. I loved that night, and I will remember it forever. Richard's father was a great gentleman.

Personally, I always appreciated that whenever I saw Sir Charles Court, he was as direct and open with me as he was with everyone, as people in this place said today. There was never an occasion when I came across him, either at a function or privately, when he did not recognise me and greet me with that humble nature that he had, even though he was that driving personality that people have talked about. I strongly support the motion.

I apologise to the house that I was not here yesterday for the condolence motion for Trevor Sprigg. I would like to have been here, but there was a large health meeting in Merredin that I felt I had to attend on behalf of my constituency. I extend my condolences to the Sprigg family and apologise for not being here at yesterday's event.

I also extend my condolences to the Court family in celebration of their father—what a great man he was.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I ask members to rise and support this motion by observing a minute's silence.

Question passed, members standing.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, members.

[Applause.]