

HON GARRY KENNETH KELLY

Condolence Motion

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural - Leader of the House) [4.05 pm]: I move without notice -

That this House expresses its deep regret at the death of Hon Garry Kenneth Kelly, a former member of the Legislative Council for the South Metropolitan Region and places on record its appreciation for his long public service and tenders its profound sympathy to his wife and members of his family on their bereavement.

It is with great regret and sadness that I rise to speak to this motion to commemorate the passing of our friend Hon Garry Kelly. After being elected in a by-election, Garry Kelly represented the then South Metropolitan Province from 13 March 1982 before becoming a member for the South Metropolitan Region from May 1989 to 1993. I understand that Mr Kelly was an excellent chairman and a sound organiser, and that his capacity for quiet and effective work was demonstrated through his contributions to committee deliberations in this place. I mention just some of the roles that Garry undertook. He was a member of the Joint House Committee and Standing Orders Committee from 1989. He was also Chairman of the Standing Committee on Legislation from 1990 and Chairman of Committees.

Born in Subiaco in May 1948, Hon Garry Kelly was educated in a number of country high schools before finishing a Bachelor of Science degree at the then Western Australian Institute of Technology and gaining a teachers certificate from the University of Western Australia. He went on to be a science teacher at a number of high schools in metropolitan Perth, including Armadale and Applecross Senior High Schools. Garry Kelly was a stalwart of the Australian Labor Party. He joined the University of Western Australia branch in 1966 and served in a number of roles, including as the foundation president of the Western Australian Institute of Technology branch in 1979. He continued his active participation in the Australian Labor Party even after he was no longer a member of the state parliamentary party.

Perhaps the true testimony to the achievements of his life rests in his record of community service. After sustaining a head injury at work in 1980, Garry went on to play a key role in the formation of the Head Injured Society of Western Australia. I understand that he played a key role in supporting what is now Headwest in its formative years. Garry was a founding member of the Palmyra community association, and was founding president of that association from 1981 to 1984. As part of Garry's community involvement, he helped in the election to the Melville City Council of local people strongly linked to their communities. He was also a board member of the Christian Brothers' College in Fremantle for six years, and a very active member of the Citizens Advice Bureau of Western Australia in Fremantle, where he was a volunteer coordinator and a volunteer counsellor.

My personal recollections of Garry Kelly go back a very long way. In a sense, that reflects the nature of his commitment to the community and to the Australian Labor Party. I first met Garry Kelly in Merredin. Although it would seem from his activity in his adult life at least that his community involvement was by and large metropolitan, Garry Kelly was a very strong supporter of the then rural Labor movement, and he was a great contributor to rural Labor meetings in various parts of non-metropolitan Western Australia. I recall Garry as being one of the real drivers in linking country communities to metropolitan communities, by establishing common bonds and striving for common goals. He was a great advocate for the community and the Australian Labor Party.

Our thoughts are with his family. Garry was a man who participated actively in the community and did his utmost to represent the interests and concerns of the community in everyday life.

HON NORMAN MOORE (Mining and Pastoral - Leader of the Opposition) [4.10 pm]: I second the motion. I join with the Leader of the House in expressing regret at the passing of our former colleague, Hon Garry Kelly. He was a most dedicated member of the Australian Labor Party. He joined the party shortly after he left school and started university. He was the son of a school caretaker and was educated at Northam, Manjimup and Melville Senior High Schools. He graduated as a teacher from the University of Western Australia and earned a degree in physics at the Western Australian Institute of Technology. For 11 years he was a science teacher at Armadale and Applecross Senior High Schools. Garry Kelly demonstrated his commitment to politics the hard way by standing as a candidate in seats that his party could not realistically hope to win. It takes a dedicated person to do that. At the age of 22 he was the ALP candidate for Metropolitan Province in the Legislative Council in the 1971 election. The province consisted mostly of the western suburbs of Perth, and Garry did very well to win over 40 per cent of the final vote. Three years later he stood for South Perth against Bill Grayden and achieved 40 per cent of the vote. In 1977 he contested the new seat of Murdoch for the ALP and was defeated by only 800 votes. He recontested the seat at the 1980 election but was defeated by 1 500 votes in what was then the State's second-largest electorate. It seems fitting that in February 1982, when Hon Howard Olney

resigned his South Metropolitan Province seat, Garry Kelly was given the opportunity to enter Parliament. The province then consisted of the Assembly seats of Fremantle, Cockburn, Melville and East Melville. Garry was elected at the March by-election with 62.5 per cent of the vote and a significant majority of 12 000 votes. In 1986 he was re-elected with an impressive 70 per cent of the vote. The province then consisted of the Assembly seats of Fremantle, Cockburn, Melville and Rockingham. As the last general election fought under the old province system, it represented the largest winning margin of any candidate. When elections were held in 1989 for this House under proportional representation, Garry Kelly headed the ALP ticket for the South Metropolitan Region. The ticket secured three of the five seats available. His career ended in 1993 when he was unable to secure re-election from the third position on his party ticket.

Garry Kelly was a very successful and active member for his constituency. The Leader of the House has indicated a number of things that he was involved with during his life. Garry showed great determination in supporting his party. During his time in Parliament he was a well-respected member of this House. He was also a very popular Chairman of Committees. When the vote for that position was held I was the candidate for my side of the House, and although we had more numbers than Garry's side, he won. That demonstrated his popularity with at least one of my colleagues, who will remain nameless. After his election I said that I thought he would make an excellent Chairman of Committees, and that proved to be correct. He was excellent in that role.

On behalf of the Opposition I extend our sincere sympathies to Garry's family. They can be consoled by knowing that he was a fine parliamentarian and a much respected and admired citizen of Western Australia.

HON JIM SCOTT (South Metropolitan) [4.14 pm]: I got to know Garry Kelly quite well as I assumed his office when I was first elected. I had a consistent, but not close, relationship with him for some time. I know the difficult time he had coming to terms with losing his seat and the illness of his wife. He struggled to manage his family. During that time I was aware of what a good person he was. Because of the troubles he experienced, I used to feel a bit guilty that I ended up with his seat in Parliament. He was never angry with me about that as he accepted it as part of politics. It was a terrible shock to hear of his death. I found out only by reading the newspapers. I would like to have acted more quickly in extending my condolences to his family.

From my experience of him, and from what I have read, I know him to have been a very honourable member of Parliament. He always strived to do what was best for the community. On behalf of the Greens (WA) I extend our sympathy to his family. We agree with the sentiments expressed by the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition. Garry Kelly was a very fine person and deserves to be recognised as such by this House.

HON PETER FOSS (East Metropolitan) [4.16 pm]: I join with other members in expressing my regret at the passing of Garry Kelly. He was a very good Chairman of Committees and was the inaugural Chairman of the Legislation Committee. It was a challenging task to establish that committee, and he established it very well. The committee has since performed a very important role in this Parliament. During his time as chairman he took several brave stands against his own party, which was not easy. It was quite novel at the time. He established a degree of independence for the committee that has stood it in good stead for many years. As every member who has served on such a committee knows, a degree of rapport and friendship grows that is much stronger than normal friendships across the Chamber. We had many good times together and I greatly valued his friendship.

The time we grew closest was when we travelled. The Legislation Committee did not travel very much, but it did travel to New Zealand. During that time we drove from place to place with our doughty chairman as our driver. It was quite interesting, especially when our car was impounded. When we tried to retrieve it one morning we found that Garry had parked it outside the Morman church next door and it had been towed away. During that trip he told me of "the three rules for an old man"; however, I will not repeat them in the House. I thought they were very funny at the time. I do not find them quite so funny these days. Nevertheless, they are true.

He had a very good sense of humour and was a great companion. One reads many death notices in the newspapers and is not affected very much, but when I read of Garry's death I felt a real pang of loss and some guilt that I had not followed up my association with him. It is very easy not to show one's friendship to one's friends. When a member leaves this place it is easy to lose contact, which is very regrettable. We had some good times together and I had great respect for him. It is a very sad ending to his career. I extend my condolences to his family, as I am sure they feel his loss greatly.

HON DERRICK TOMLINSON (East Metropolitan) [4.19 pm]: I wish to associate myself with the condolence motion. Two phrases have been used to describe Hon Garry Kelly. One was by Hon Kim Chance, who described him as "a stalwart of the ALP". The other was by Hon Jim Scott, who described him as "a good person". In my experience, Garry Kelly was both of these things, which proves that the two are not mutually exclusive. I learnt very early in my interest in politics from a remark made by the then Senator Reg Withers that

you have no friends in politics. Although I believe that to be true, there are people whom I like in politics and people on the other side whom I like and have liked in politics. One of the things that one learns after working in this place is that the people on the other side are not necessarily enemies. Garry Kelly was a person whom I would like to have called a friend but certainly he was one politician whom I liked. I recall the early debates in which I participated when I had the temerity, because I was green in judgment, to make some remarks about the dismissal of the Whitlam Government. Of course, the Leader of the Government of the day was Hon Joe Berinson who had been a minister in that particular Government. Hon Joe Berinson took me to task as only he can, and it became a familiar experience. What really impressed me was Garry Kelly who rose shortly after I sat down and gave a learned and well-informed treatise on the dismissal of the Whitlam Government. I then saw him through different eyes. He was a stalwart of the Australian Labor Party but he was a thinking stalwart. His commitment was more than an emotional commitment; it was an intellectual commitment and for that I admire him deeply.

As the initial chairman of the Legislation Committee, it was very largely he and his chairmanship that gave the mark of that committee as one in which issues could be progressed in a bipartisan way. He was a stalwart of the ALP but he was a thinking man and was prepared to listen to argument, advance argument and accept argument even though, on occasions, the arguments that he accepted were contrary to the position of his party. He was indeed a good person. I deeply mourn his passing and I join with my colleagues in sending deep condolences to his family.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon John Cowdell): I associate myself with the comments of honourable members in supporting this motion. The shock and tragedy of Garry Kelly's death was brought home to me by the headline in the *Fremantle Herald*, "Kelly dead at 54". This was amplified by the photo that accompanied the article. It is more tragic to know that Garry leaves Glen, his wife of six months, and his children Matthew, Tom and Sam, who are all teenagers, and two step-children. Garry overcame personal adversity to arrive here. In his maiden speech on 30 March 1982 recorded in *Hansard* he said -

On 15 April 1980 after spending most of the day in the sun at an interschool swimming carnival, I collapsed and fell heavily in the science staffroom at the Applecross Senior High School. I fractured my skull and was admitted to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital where I underwent emergency surgery the same evening. I was in a coma and remained in that coma under intensive care for the following three weeks, during which time I came very close to death.

During the early part of my recovery I was confined to a wheelchair; I could not keep my balance and had to learn to walk all over again.

Within two years Garry had succeeded not only in making a substantial recovery but in defeating ALP party president Tom Butler for pre-selection to the South Metropolitan seat and being elected at a by-election in March 1982 to this Chamber. Garry's advocacy here was based on his own personal experience, his commitment to his electorate and adherence to Labor ideals.

In his maiden speech he referred to his accident and made a special plea for support for the work of the Head Injured Society of WA. He also took up the issue of education funding relying on his experience as a teacher in the state system and as a member of the State School Teachers Union of Western Australia. In 1982 he argued "surely education and health should be first cabs off the rank when we are allocating funds. What in the world is a Government in power for if it cannot meet these basic needs of a civilised society? Certainly the health of our people and the education of our children deserve a high priority." He argued for public transport and in particular, the reopening of the Perth to Fremantle rail line, which had recently been closed. He made the point that democracy is a dynamic thing and it is not just going to the polling booth once every three years, as it then was.

Garry worked hard for parliamentary reform. He argued for the transition of this Chamber into a genuine House of Review, for the introduction of proportional representation and he supported the development of an extensive committee system. It is fitting that he should have served as inaugural chairman of the Legislation Committee and as fifteenth Chairman of Committees of this House. Garry overcame adversity in 1980 and we benefited. His parliamentary career, as has been mentioned, was brought to an end with the anti-Labor swing of 1993 when only two of Labor's three sitting members were returned in the South Metropolitan Region. He fought adversity again nursing his beloved wife Cheryl for five years before she died of cancer in 1998 and raising his young family. Garry continued to serve his family, his party and the Fremantle community until the end.

Adversity has finally triumphed but as Hon Mark Nevill said in his eulogy at Garry's funeral, "We remember you Garry with affection, with joy and with thanks because we enjoyed and shared the warmth of your friendship."

Extract from *Hansard*
[COUNCIL - Wednesday, 14 August 2002]
p28c-31a

Hon Kim Chance; Hon Norman Moore; Hon Jim Scott; Hon Peter Foss; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; President

Before asking members to signify their support for this motion by rising and standing in silence for one minute, I indicate to the House that, as is the usual practice, I will ensure that the comments made in this condolence motion are passed on to the family of the late Garry Kelly.

Question passed, members standing.