

Vale Bob Harrison - Obituaries



It is with great sadness that we share with you the news that legendary Sydney tenement agent and SMEDG supporter Bob Harrison has passed away aged 73. Bob was the son of Jack Harrison, himself a legendary senior geologist in the Geological Survey of NSW. Bob went to North Sydney Boys High School, and after studying mining engineering, Bob started his career working in the Mining Titles Branch at the old Department of Mineral Resources in the late 1960's. This launched his +50 year career in tenement management, mainly operating through his own consultancy firm – formerly AMTS Pty Ltd, and more recently MTS Pty Ltd.

Bob will be remembered for his vast knowledge of the ever-changing world of government mining legislation, regulations and policies; his always dedicated service to his clients; his strong advocacy to politicians and bureaucrats on behalf of all NSW explorers (often characterized by emails typed in multi-colours and 14 point fonts to stress a point!); the high level of respect which he enjoyed from both Industry and government; and his sometimes gruff but forever charming manner.

We will all miss Bob's abundant enthusiasm, his passion for every challenge in his life, and his unique style of friendship.

We would also like to take this opportunity to pass on our sincerest condolences to Bob's family and friends on his passing.

Russell Meares

The following tribute to Bob was written by his good friend, geologist, *Doug Brewster...*

I am crestfallen to announce my deeply respected friend and industry colleague, the indefatigable mining title master Robert Harrison has died overnight – he was 73 years old. He is survived by his wife Wendy, first wife Suzie, and daughters Jasmine and Brie. He will be acutely missed by many.

Physically strong, he was a skier and a fine sportsman in youth, winning North Sydney Boys High School Blues for Rugby and Water Polo. A Baliphile, he was a peculiar mix of contemporary pursuits and traditional mores.

Bob was unique, with over 50 years in NSW and national mining title consulting he was the most experienced, knowledgeable and competent practitioner of his ilk in Australia. In short, a legend.

His long service to the mining industry, as an unsalaried independent consultant for hire, is immeasurable. Bob worked to the end and the shockwaves of his death to the NSW mining industry, especially the mineral exploration community, will be long-felt. A tireless and authoritative practitioner gone.

His forthright pro-bono advocacy for practical mining title administration reform and clear, fair mineral exploration land access regulations is vast. Ultimately, the mere listing of his countless independent professional contributions to our industry is a feeble measure of a mighty character.

To know Bob was to get a real world flavour of the fearless, world-weary, frank and stoically honourable hardboiled fictional characters of the interwar pulp magazines. He was the closest thing to the fantasy portraits of the likes of Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe I can imagine meeting.

Bob was a lionhearted expert in exemplar. Fierce, blunt, direct, endlessly hardworking, unswervingly committed and intolerant of fools or the ambivalent. He demanded the upmost standards of logic, knowledge and competence from both government bureaucrats and clients alike. His high standards didn't discriminate and he was very fond of telling his clients I am the *insulant*, not a consultant. He projected an overwhelming force of get it right, don't waste my time or get lost. Irrascible for the reluctant but an invigorating and rewarding challenge for the willing.

Distinctly an old Sydney salt; he was reminiscent of the rustic, direct, practical and staunch men I knew as a small child. Indeed, when thinking about Bob now, I am reminded of a famous quote regarding the Sydney business icon Kerry Packer – "He was not just frightening but was frighteningly smart".

Despite his outwardly fearsome and terse demeanour, if you were committed, then you would find no firmer, passionate, generous and sure supporter. He would do anything for you; there was nobody better to have in your corner during the struggles of both business and life. Although I am saddened by his death he would have been the first to say get over it and press ahead. So he's still in my, and all our corners.

I am profoundly honoured and privileged to have known Bob. An example of fierce expertise and assuredness most can only wish to achieve. The mining industry has lost a giant in his field and I do not think we will see his like again. His unprecedented contribution as an independent specialist and a good, honest man is

to be wholeheartedly celebrated. Some future recognition by an institutional memorial reward would be fitting. Our industry should rise to acknowledge its loyal foot-soldiers.

His steadfast example can be aspired to but unlikely matched. I was lucky to be its witness. We now live in different and less forthright times.

Vale Bob Harrison.

Doug Brewster
0417 611 460

Bob, on many SMEDG Cruises

