

Dr G.D. (David) Klingner

(1.01.1944 – 13.08.2018)



While Dr David Klingner could cure depression and anxiety with his infectious laugh and good humour, he was not a medico but an outstanding geologist and business executive. David was educated at Brisbane Grammar and the University of Queensland then, after a brief stint at Bougainville, replete with a PhD from Melbourne University, he embarked on a lifelong career with CRA/Rio Tinto.

He spent several years at Broken Hill as Chief Geologist, where his talents became quickly obvious, and he was charged with leading CRA's overseas exploration programs. This took him all over the world – Indonesia, Thailand, Mexico, Chile and other exotic places. Fluent in Bahasa, one of his outstanding achievements was the negotiation of the contract of work for the Kaltim Prima Coal Project in Kalimantan, Indonesia.

At the insistence of BP, the joint venture partner, he became the first Managing Director and saw the construction of the project through to completion and success. His talents of leadership, business acumen and geological skills were admired throughout the company and, after a time, as head of CRA's Energy Group, he moved to London as Global Head of Exploration for Rio Tinto. He held this position until his retirement.

David was as at home with analysts in New York or London as he was with a drill crew in Peru, Laos or Canada. He understood and valued people and knew how to acknowledge their contributions, no matter how foreign their technical skills.

Along with him on this journey was wife Georgia and children Adam, Rachel and Sam – all of whom saw some exotic schoolyards around the world as a result of the family's travels. Tragedy struck when Adam, Georgia and David's first son, died suddenly of meningococcal and it was a gut wrenching telephone call he received while working in South America.

David was not only a fine minerals explorer but a canny negotiator, an accomplished businessman and a wonderful leader. He was also a mentor to the young professionals who had their careers ahead of them. These broad skills were to stand him in good stead in his post Rio Tinto career as Chairman of Codan, Turquoise Hill and ERA and at the time of his passing, as Chairman of Karoon Gas.

In the face of his Queensland roots, David abandoned rugby and embraced the AFL's Richmond Tigers with passion. It may have been the gold in the jersey that enthused him. Other than family, one of David's other passions was golf. He was a member of one of the great clubs, Royal Melbourne, and often embarked on golf tours with his old mining colleagues. His successes had a lot in common with exploration discoveries – few and far between.

David worked with and is remembered by many of the great characters of the global mining industry. A true leader, modest and funny, his was a life well lived but gone too soon. Condolences to Georgia, Sam, Rachel and grandson Leigh; and to David's sister, Ann and brother, John.

A memorial celebration will be held on Sunday 9 September 2018, 12pm to 4pm at Stokehouse, 30 Jacka Boulevard, St Kilda.

By Leigh Clifford and Gerry Burke

Leigh and Gerry were life-long friends of the deceased and former work colleagues.