

Tributes to John Loizou

DEAR CHRISTINA,

WE ARE GRIEF-STRICKEN OVER JOHN'S DEMISE.

HE WAS A CONSTANT FRIEND OF MY FAMILY, MY TRUSTED SUPPORTER IN WORK, A MAN I COULD TURN TO IN DIFFICULTIES AND TALK WITH IN ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE.

JOHN HAD LIVED HIS LIFE TO THE FULL, AND THE HECTIC MONTHS AND YEARS HE SHARED WITH ME AT **THE VIET NAM NEWS** AND OUR HEAD-TO-HEAD RAMBLINGS AT MY HOME WILL REMAIN AMONG MY FONDEST MEMORIES.

Nguyen Khuyen and family

Bob Gosford: John Loizou – a “journalist’s journalist” – passed away in the Royal Perth Hospital at 12.15a.m. on Thursday 17th January 2013. Ashley Manicaros, who worked with John at the *NT News* described John as a “grumpy, cantankerous, old school journalist who knew how to dig up a scoop.”

John not only broke news with a vigor and passion rarely seen but on occasion made it. The year fades into memory but John was the object of then NT cabinet minister Mick Palmer’s attention when he ‘snotted’ John during a session at the local Petty Sessions bar. From that event came, in part, John’s place in the annals of journalism in the Territory as being the man responsible for the immortal headline ‘Toothless MP head butts reporter’. Palmer, first removing his watch and teeth, admitted to having ‘snotted’ our man, then working at the *Sunday Territorian*.

John not only broke news with a vigor and passion rarely seen but on occasion made it. The year fades into memory but John was the object of then NT cabinet minister Mick Palmer’s attention when he ‘snotted’ John during a long afternoon at the local Petty Sessions bar. That ‘snottng’ cemented John’s place in the annals of Territory journalism as being the man responsible for the immortal headline ‘*Toothless MP head butts reporter*’. Palmer, first removing his watch and teeth, admitted to having ‘snotted’ our man, then working at the *Sunday Territorian*. It seems that news wasn’t the only thing that John could break. Paul Costigan of Darwin’s Roma Bar remembers that John once “gave me a friendly hug and cracked 2 of my ribs.”

Ex-Darwin barrister Brian Cassells was in Petty Sessions that day and remembers John as “one of the last old style journos. Dug for his own info and did not rely on ministerial releases. I was present at the infamous incident in the old Petty Sessions. John was a dedicated anarchist who never revealed his sources who’s accuracy was a cause of amazement to me. Last of his kind.”

Phil Cullen worked in Darwin as a journalist and local bureau chief at the ABC for many years and recalls that John “used to drive a Moke and would say that anyone who needed air-con and was afraid of a little rain wasn’t cut out for the Top End.” This morning John’s colleague at the *NT News* Nigel Adlam published this tribute.

Nigel Adlam: THE man considered by many to have been the Territory’s best-ever journalist has died. John Loizou, who had been ill for several years, was 70. He worked for the *NT News* and *Sunday Territorian* before moving to Hanoi in Vietnam. But his first love was radio.

Loizou made the news himself when he was headbutted in a Darwin pub by then CLP Cabinet Minister Mick Palmer. The reporter played football for Carlton reserves before moving to the Territory to work for the ABC. Loizou had a reputation for “going the biff” while playing for Wanderers and St Marys. He won the NT Journalist of the Year award in the early 1990s for a story about two women who ran away from a Chinese sweat shop at Darwin’s NT government-owned Trade Development Zone.

Everybody was looking for the women — government goons, the police and the Chinese factory owners. Loizou found them — and discovered they were allowed only \$1 a day from their pay. Typically, he didn’t turn up to the awards ceremony — he was down the pub — and the trophy had to be collected on his behalf by the then photographic editor Clive Hyde.

Loizou had many other great scoops. CLP Cabinet Minister at the time, Fred Finch, said in Parliament that street gangs were terrorising Casuarina, including an all-girl gang called the Black Mafia. Loizou disappeared from the Sunday Territorian office and returned two hours later with a pretty but tough-looking girl and announced: "This is the leader of the Black Mafia."

He wrote in an old-fashioned style and often shook his head in disbelief at the way that tabloid newspapers "crunched" the English language. But he had a great hunger to tell a good story — and hold the rich and famous to account. Loizou was a Marxist but was impeccably balanced in his writing. He thought that Labor's first chief minister, Clare Martin, made the Territory "a better, kinder place".

Loizou, who died in Perth on Wednesday night, leaves his wife Cree, and two sons by his first marriage, Brendan and Damian

Farewell John... I remember what you shared with us, years ago, about the rhythm of the English language... the beauty of Earth Dreaming... I might not have understood it then, but I believed in it. Thank you for sharing your time with us in Hanoi. You are so dearly missed.

*Posted by: **Lan of Canberra** 1:49pm Friday*

Comment 15 of 15

RIP John. Viet Nam News staff always love you.

*Posted by: **Tohang of Hanoi, Vietnam** 12:30pm Friday*

Comment 14 of 15

I worked with John and shared digs with him and his wonderful wife Olive in Canberra in the 1960s. A great character but an exciting and dangerous man to be with at times. My thoughts are with all who loved him.

*Posted by: **Terry Sweetman of Brisbane** 12:01pm Friday*

Comment 13 of 15

Sympathies to family and all those who knew John. It is people like John who made the NT what it is. VALE John

*Posted by: **darwin citizen of darwin** 8:45am Friday*

Comment 12 of 15

I had the pleasure of working with John in Hanoi for a brief period and loved to listen to his passionate tirades about the backrooms of NT politics as we sat sipping Bia Hoi. He was a singular human being.

*Posted by: **Dan of Darwin** 8:18am Friday*

Comment 11 of 15

Old school maybe, but when it came to print news, John was the best the NT had. Often provocative but always on the money when it came to well sourced, factual reporting. Cheeky, irreverent humour as dry as the Todd. Of political persuasion left of the left, right of the right. No-one ever pinned him down. A giant of the NT. RIP John.

*Posted by: **Warwick Stanley of Newtown, Sydney** 8:17am Friday*

Comment 10 of 15

Vale Mr Loizou...one of the immortals but THE BEST ? I think Frank Alcorta , Peter Wilson, Jack Ellis and Dave Nason would all be worthy contenders for that title.

*Posted by: **Shane Stringer of Darwin** 8:16am Friday*

Comment 9 of 15

RIP John ... A great journo and a tremendous bloke who will be missed.

*Posted by: **Mark Wilton of Darwin** 7:59am Friday*

Comment 8 of 15

a man of character, courage, integrity and joy ... and a very pleasant drunk as well! MISSED

*Posted by: **jeff of kelland** 5:30am Friday*

Comment 7 of 15

Vale John. Old Eagles never die..They become Saints.

*Posted by: **Olfart of darwin.** 11:54pm Thursday*

Comment 6 of 15

Farewell John, another great Territorian for us all to remember...A journalist of high ideals and integrity who was reporting at a time the many Rednecks of the NT were in or seeking positions of power...Vale John Loizou.

*Posted by: **feral of Boundary Bore** 8:21pm Thursday*

Comment 5 of 15

I always enjoyed reading John Loizou's columns and comments in the NT News and Sunday Territorian. He was a fine journalist who wrote in a way that made readers think. There was depth and substance in his stories, for what he wrote was predicated by careful research and consideration. He had a way with words which impressed. He was a man who made an impact. John Loizou was a man who added to 'our' newspaper's circulation because people bought the paper to read his words. Thanks and farewell.

*Posted by: **Henry Gray** 7:22pm Thursday*

Comment 4 of 15

Mates for 43 years. Goodbye John, you have left a fine legacy in print and your name lives on with two high-achieving sons who will be grieving for their dad. Sympathy to Brendan and Damien, your 'other half' Christine and your sister Margaret..

*Posted by: **Bill of Malak** 5:09pm Thursday*

Comment 3 of 15

Well, another one bites the dust. Goodbye to an obviously well-regarded and noble journalist who knew his place indeed, unlike many who can't resist the temptation to pursue celebrity status regardless of the cost. Good on you John Loizou & I am sure there were many pollies like CLP's Mick Palmer, whose peace was SO deservedly disturbed. THE lone dingo.

*Posted by: **David Chewings aka THE lone dingo of Murray Bridge** 4:45pm Thursday*

Comment 2 of 15

RIP John Loizou...a grumpy, cantankerous, old school journalist who knew how to dig up a scoop. RIP John!

*Posted by: **Ashley Manicaros of Darwin** 4:31pm Thursday*

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