

# Vale: Phil SMITH

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## Extracts from the History of Touch - Grant Rodwell 2005

The late Phil Smith became the ATA's first Life Member when he was awarded Life Membership of the Australian Touch Association at the presentation ceremony at the end of the 1986 Nationals in Glenelg.

Barrie Keenahan remembers: "We went away on a Touch weekend and little did I know that nobody ever booked in with Phil in the same room. We booked in, naturally in different beds and separate rooms, but guess what? I finished up pulling my bed into the foyer because of Phil's snoring! And he was in the room next door. It was apparently legendary, but nobody told me. One night he fell asleep on the lounge when we were relaxing as a group.

To the sheer amazement of those present his raucous snoring actually shook an empty wine glass on a table top with his snoring. Phil was a terrific guy, as large as a mountain, but very kind and easy to talk to: a really nice guy, nothing was too much trouble for him if you were involved in sport". Barrie is extremely proud to have his own name on the same Life Membership board as Phil.

Phil was named 1980 ATA All-Stars Official on the Year. Cary Thompson recalls that was a visionary. His foresight into the expansion of the sport internationally has materialised and it is patently unfortunate that he is no longer with us to witness this remarkable expansion of the sport. Phil was acutely aware of the financial burden placed on amateur sports people, and certainly Touch players were not excluded from this responsibility.

In his position of General Manager of New South Wales Touch he devised a scheme whereby all registered players would be charged an annual fee of one dollar to go into a special trust account to fund representative players' expenses. Phil's detailed budget of this program showed all travel, accommodation, clothing expenses would be more that covered from this fund. Unfortunately, such future planning was not always was in accord with many of the volunteer administrators of the day.

Phil was such a visionary that one night he arrived home and informed his wife that he had mortgaged their house to fund NSW Touch's operations for the next twelve months. Such courage is the reason NSWTA is in such a powerful and sound financial position today. Teams today still struggle to fund their players to representative tournaments. Sadly, Phil's foresight and expertise has been lost forever to the Touch community.

### **TFA Life Membership Citation**

In 1986, Phil Smith was the first person ever to become a Life Member of TFA. He was bestowed the award at a presentation ceremony following the 1986 Nationals in Glenelg. Phil was instrumental in the development of the Australian Touch Association (the ATA but now TFA) as well as the formation of the Federation of International Touch (FIT). His efforts within the sport were further recognised when a medal was named his honour. The 'Phil Smith Medal' is awarded to players who share Phil's qualities of leadership, sportsmanship and outstanding contribution at the highest level to the sport of Touch Football at international event

### **Phil Smith Medallist Citation**

Phil Smith was one of the founding members and the first Life Member of TFA. He is regarded as the driving force behind the first National Championships. This award was first instigated at the 2007 World Cup in recognition of Phil's vision and contribution to elite Touch in Australia.

### **Further Extracts from the History of Touch**

- *Grant Rodwell 2005*

#### Phil Smith takes over as President and Executive Officer of the ATFA

By the beginning of the 1980s Touch Football was developing at a rapid rate. The inaugural Nationals were a resounding success, and heralded enormous promise for the years to come. The New South Wales administrative task was massive for the looming 1981 season:

- Life Be In It. Business Houses Competition at Sydney's Domain from January to March.
- Sydney Metropolitan Inter-District Championship -- Winter Series, from June to September.

- Sydney Metropolitan Inter-District Championship -- Summer Series, from October to March. History of Australian Touch Football Association
- Life Be In It. Business Houses Competition at Sydney's Domain from November to March 1982.
- New South Wales Schools Championships in Sydney from September to November.
- State Cup at Endeavour Field, Woollooware in late November.
- New South Wales Country Divisional Championships in Sydney in mid-December.
- City-Country Challenge in Sydney in mid-January 1982.
- National Championships in Canberra on 23 and 24 January 1982.

This was not the sort of stuff that could be organised out of somebody's kitchen!

In the past Ray Vawdon and Bob Dykes had carried the administrative load for both New South Wales and the national scene. In late 1980 Phil Smith took the new position of ATFA President and Executive Director; Bob Dyke assumed responsibilities as Honorary Secretary Treasurer; Peter Rooney became Director of Referees; and Paul Eggers became Director of Promotions.

The NSWTFFA new logo, introduced for the first time at the opening of Touch Football. With the opening of the Touch Football headquarters at Touch Football House at 328 Kingsgrove Road, Kingsgrove, and sharing the space with the NSWTFFA volunteers, the ATFA finally had its own headquarters, albeit, shared, and a full-time executive officer in Phil Smith. President of the ATFA, Phil Smith who had just taken over office from Ray Vawdon, with Helen Flannigan from Johnsons Wax, the ATFA major sponsor at the time.