

Funeral Eulogy of Eldo Smart

I have known the late Eldo Smart since 1991 when I met him when he was still at school. I had just arrived at the University of the Western Cape to study and a mutual friend of ours introduced me to the chess club Belhar Knights. I conducted a lecture and met a group of boys who would become my friends, colleagues, teammates and comrades at university and in life.

1. UWC student

Eldo joined UWC in 1994 to study BCom accounting. I was very glad he had joined as our chess team was now considerably strengthened. We played our first matches against one another outside the campus bookstore where we had a little chess corner during breaks. Eldo was fiercely competitive which was a quality he exhibited throughout his life whether it be in sport, administration, work and life generally.



Eldo would lead UWC that year to The University of the North as I was on Olympiad duty and he ably led the team to first place in the inaugural student championship under the newly elected Sassu structure. This was the harbinger of many successes for UWC and Eldo. In 1995 he was my vice-captain when I competed for the last time and we defended our title at home at UWC. In 1996 Eldo led the team to the inter university championship in Umtata where they beat the other teams. In 1997 he obtained his WP University colours and he had already been awarded his colours at UWC in 1995.

2. Chess administrator

After graduation he started worked professionally. He was building his club and it was through this

that we began to see the leadership role at community level. Eldo attended the Chess WP meetings that were held at that time as a delegate where he honed his skills as a delegate and administrator. This was one of the reasons for Eldo's later successes as an administrator because he had worked at club level, university level and now again at club level.

In 2000 I became president of Chess Western Province and within the next three years Eldo became an executive member. He held many different portfolios over the years but the one he was justly proud of was the Match and League Secretary. This allowed him to stage the various chess events in Cape Town and also run a very successful league which today boasts four divisions and over 66 teams.

Eldo and I sat on many committees together and it was always a joy to work with him, whatever task was assigned he would invariably attend to it. We always knew Eldo would be in attendance and I remember fondly how full the old bakkie of his used to be when he gave lifts to the nearby development clubs in Uitsig and Ravensmead. This, Eldo carried out without having to be asked because he knew that by giving the youngsters a lift to the chess world that some of them would make it in life today as many of them did.

In this period Eldo and I travelled across the length and breadth of the country. We had no problems travelling in my old red Ford Tracer to tournaments and events across the country. In 2001 we travelled to Speskom which was a famous event in Johannesburg to compete in there. He had forgotten his favourite chess jacket at home and told he couldn't play properly if he didn't have it with him and lo and behold I saw a friend who had flown up to play bring his jacket to him at the opening round because he couldn't play without it.

On the roads whether it was to the Eastern Cape to play the EP Opens, the Free State to play the Interprovincials, or Johannesburg to compete Eldo loved the cut and thrust of the chess world. He was able to socialise and communicate with people from all walks of life and communities. It was on these trips we were able to discuss many of our ideas to better chess and sport in our communities and in South Africa generally. He always reminded me to keep my friends close and my enemies even closer!

It was in 2011 that Eldo started to come into his own as an administrator. He became president of Chess Western Province and also a year later that of Chess Western Cape. We always believed that a strong WP always leads to a strong South Africa. Eldo busied himself forming new clubs and today after many years of work from him and others, WP boasts 41 active chess clubs across the city.

Eldo had the ability to lead people and manage projects. He tackled projects with gusto and was always available to pick up the slack wherever it was needed. Eldo then joined the executive of Chess South Africa and thereafter he became Vice President and later on President. He popularised chess and loved being interviewed. He was able to talk about chess because he loved the game and could converse as he still actively played for Belhar Knights in the WP league. Despite his busy schedule he was dedicated to his factory. He often left meetings or started meetings at nine pm to first accommodate his schedule because he always advised us that his clients came first.



3. Eldo as a friend

Eldo had many facets of his life and I only concentrated on the chess aspects. There were very many little things I will always treasure. In 2004 when I was completing my Masters thesis, Eldo for a full month brought me every Sunday a nice plate of food to eat and the Sunday Times. Thanks Aunt Elaine for thinking about me always. He used to stop by to encourage me and to make sure I am finishing because he was pushing me. He was also very excited about the doctorate I completed and would always check up on me.

Eldo loved meeting new people and it was with great joy that he in 2014 travelled for the first outside our borders when he went to Namibia and Norway. In Norway he represented SA at the World Chess Federation General Council. On both occasions I traveled with him. He had a laugh at my expense when I didn't realise Namibia was one hour behind us and I was already packed and ready to leave when he informed me that I had forgotten to change my watch settings! In 2015 he travelled to Dubai and in 2016 he travelled to Azerbaijan to again represent South Africa at these forums. Eldo was very vocal and well known to many delegates as he was not afraid of speaking to people and learning more about their countries. I see these latter roles as the culmination of the work started at Belhar Knights and continued at district, provincial and national level and then to international level.

When Eldo went into hospital the first time with his heart a few years ago, I often visited him with Time and Fortune magazines and the Mail and Guardian newspaper. He loved keeping abreast of current affairs and he enjoyed the politics and parliament. One of his happiest moments was attending both the Provincial Parliament and National Parliament on different occasions.

Eldo enjoyed his sport as well. He loved going to Newlands to watch cricket and rugby. We often watched the great football matches together and I remember him being very happy when a certain Liverpool Football Club won the European Champions league in Istanbul after coming from behind when they were down three nil.

It is with great sadness that we in the chess community take leave of Eldo today. He will be remembered as a leader, guide, mentor, friend and teammate to many of us. On a personal note, Eldo was a great friend to me as I am sure he was too many of you. I was able to turn to him to discuss many difficult matters of whatever nature they be, personal or otherwise. He was there when you needed someone in that hour of need and was that friend you always could call when you needed to chat.

Rest in peace
Eldo Smart



We will continue the work you started.

Regards

Dr Lyndon Bouah

PS - Gedig

Eldo Smart deur Floris Abraham Brown

jou nalatenskap sal vir ewig bly

jou leer ken oor die skaakbord edelman

jou innemende geaardheid gedy

oral waar jy gaan glimlag selfvoldaan

die leer het jy geklim tot President

ons Ambassadeur vir Suid-Afrika

statige wyse man intelligent

ook staaltjies rondom die vuursmeul

konga

duisend-en-een spelers sal jou onthou

wie se pad jy gekruis het oor jare

aan elkeen se lewe het jy gebou

somerson soos goudegeel akkerblare

GOD het jou loopbaan vir ons mooi gemaak

soos slegs jy kon gee as wintersneeu kraak...

@@@@@@@@@@@@

Eldo Smart

by Floris Abraham Brown

your heritage will stay forever

I've met you over the chess board nobleman

your captivating character flourish

wherever you go smiling self-complacent

you climbed the ladder 'till President

our South-African Ambassador

man of stature intelligent

also stories round the smouldering fire drum

thousand-and-one player will remember you

who's path you have crossed over years

in each ones life you have built

summer sun like golden yellow acorn leaves

GOD made your career beautiful for us

as only you could gave while winter snow cracks...

@@@@@@@@@@@@

Floris Brown

mrflorisbrown@gmail.com

0768601036

Posbus 802 Worcester 6849

Hartzenbergstraat 102 Worcester 6850

Suid-Afrika