

Graham Solomon - Reflections by Dr Advocate Lyndon Bouah

It is with a profound sense of sadness and disbelief that I heard last night that Graham Solomon passed away. Graham was the brother of South Africa's first grandmaster Kenny Solomon and advocate Maxwell Solomon, one of South Africa's first Olympians in the democratic era.

Graham played in the Western Province league this year. He was one of the anchors of the MRL team which won the Premier Division of the WP league. Sitting on board three he was a rock for his team garnering the points. He participated in the National Club league held at UWC in September 2017 where his team came second.



Minister Marais with MRL Chess Club

I have known Graham since 1991 when I arrived in Cape Town. He was always with his brothers Maxwell and Aubrey. I didn't know Kenny at the time but I knew Maxwell as a fierce competitor. In 1992 Graham enrolled at the University of the Western Cape. He joined our chess team and considerably strengthened the team. He travelled with his us to the University of Durban- Westville where he assisted us in defending our title as national university champions. He graduated with a degree in philosophy.

Graham enjoyed team events more than individual events. He seldom played individual events with the exception of the SA Open. Whenever the SA Open was in Cape Town he would register to compete as he enjoyed playing in this prestigious event.

Graham was a member of the powerful Mitchell's Plain at the turn of the last century. He won with Mitchell's Plain chess club the Western Province League three times (1996, 2004 and 2005). The Mitchell's Plain team consisted of GM Kenny Solomon, Candidate Master Maxwell Solomon, Graham Solomon, Wilfred Nelson and Aubrey Solomon. The four brothers ensured that Mitchell's Plain was a force to be reckoned with.

Graham obtained his WP senior colours in 2002 when he travelled with me to Bloemfontein to compete

in the National Inter Regional championship. The team was Kenny Solomon, Maxwell Solomon, Jonathan Gluckman, Lyndon Bouah and Graham Solomon.

Graham loved his chess theory. In our last conversation I asked him about his game against Stellenbosch chess club played at the National Chess Club Championships. He essayed the early Queen sortie, Qb6 in the Poison Pawn variation. He and his opponents played about twenty odd moves of chess theory. He sacrificed his queen and after the game he told me that it was all theory! He won the game. In the game against Craig Willenberg he had Craig against the ropes and kept us busy a long time as he was probing for a win. Craig was able to defend and they agreed to a draw.

Graham was a true lover of chess. We all feel for him and his family. He never had a bad word to say about anyone. I often bumped into him at the home of his great friend Lorenzo Van Niekerk. At those meetings we would end up playing blitz as we did earlier this year. He had a keen interest in policy and would often ask me to explain a decision or alternatively show him an interesting game.

Graham we will miss you. Hamba Kahle my friend. We have been together since university days, we have crossed paths on the chess board, we were rivals, we were opponents, we were teammates but above all else we were friends and passionate adherents of our noble game of chess. Graham you left the world as a four time champion of Western Province and I know we will continue to remember your contribution to chess in Western Province and South Africa.

Regards.

Your friend

Lyndon Bouah