

George Martin

Introduction:

Libby Craft – I am the CEO UnitingCare Wesley Port Adelaide.

On Behalf of the Board and staff of UCWPA I would like to acknowledge the contribution and the leadership of Rev George Martin to the Port Adelaide Central Mission, now UnitingCare Wesley Port Adelaide.

It has been both a privilege and an honour to have worked under the leadership of Rev George Martin, and now to continue his legacy as the CEO. But - I do not do this alone – his spirit and values are a part of our whole organisation and I along with our board, staff, volunteers, friends, stakeholders and our community will continue to provide services to those in need.

To speak of George Martins Legacy, we must acknowledge his wife Leonie who was by his side offering him and our organisation support and encouragement.

He was an inspirational and innovative leader, committed to social justice, respected community member, astute business man, devoted to family and a dear friend to our organisation. It is on his foundations that our organisation now stands a leader in the delivery of human services in South Australia.

I will not attempt to cover all his brilliance, but I will highlight some of the main cornerstones that we have built our organisation on as he left many pathways into the future and his deep concern for the dignity and well-being of those who access our programs has had an influence on all of us.

He built many partnerships with the community, businesses and government.

He was intelligent, a quiet achiever and practical provider of services.

He led us with strong values, and a clear understanding of social justice and vision of what could be, a vision that can be translated into action.

Our Vision: which embraces the values of George Martin and what he would have expected our organisation to continue is for

A compassionate, respectful and just community in which all people participate and flourish

Our practice is guided by values that are based on Christian ethics

- Respect
- Compassion
- Courage
- Integrity

George Martin always made sure that the help offered actually reached the people who needed it and was not wasted – this continues to be our tradition.

Aged care had always been a passion of George Martins – he built a diverse portfolio, serving those most in need. He believed that Aged care should be people focussed not institutional focussed and this remains. In the last year we have cared for almost 3,000 elderly folk by providing a home, home support, and home based assessments to help older people access needed services.

Wesley House has been a part of our organisation since the 1950s. It has now been rebuilt and provides a home for 168 people – The culture remains and always will - being people focussed, improving peoples quality of life and enabling them to participate and flourish. It will be officially opened in April. Im sure he would be proud.

Our independent living unit portfolio has grown – providing a home to 165 people.

Under George Martins leadership and ongoing commitment of working with people from a range of cultural and language backgrounds he established a home support program Ethnic link. I can remember (in the 80's) when Ethnic Link (who some of you may remember was called Ethnic aged care, operating from an office that was a house in Woodville and we were serving 5 community groups – Ukrainian, Russian Croatian Polish and Serbian. It was a unique service in Australia, and continues to be so, supporting and linking elderly people from different cultures and language groups into mainstream services and educating mainstream services to be more culturally sensitive. We continue to be responsive to community, we have built on his base and commitment to people from a range of cultures.

Now we provide services across metropolitan Adelaide, with hubs in Whyalla and the Riverland – Over the last 12 months ethnic link supported 1,500 elderly people from 47 different cultural backgrounds. We provide residential aged care to Ukrainian and Croatian elderly in Seaton, Polish people at St Teresas, and at Regency Green we now have a multicultural aged care facility, giving priority in providing a home to Maltese, Spanish speaking, Chinese and Vietnamese and Aboriginal older people. We partnered with communities to provide the needed service.

We now provide over 500 elderly people a supported home in residential aged care.

In 1978 the Mission commenced a home visitation scheme for elderly people. Building on this model of service home care we now support over a hundred elderly people to stay in their own home.

George Martin always had strong commitment to providing support to people who had a mental health issue - particularly those who lived in supported residential facilities. When he received a proposal it was a time of deinstitutionalisation and we were there to lead the community sector in the provision of community based mental health services. We are now one of the main providers of community mental health in the state.

He was a leader in developing the Pursuit of Quality in aged care – As an organisation we are now internationally accredited delivering quality and person centred services across South Australian.

He had a commitment of investing in young people, providing a home to the homeless, breaking the cycle of poverty by linking people to employment and supporting families.

Building on his legacy, UCWPA is a large provider of human services in South Australia. We provide aged care, housing, family and support programs, youth services, services for people with mental health issues, support to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, indigenous and employment programs, community development, financial counselling and emergency relief. Although we have grown, we are responding to needs in our community - as our mentor has shown us.

In the future our organisation will endeavour to continue to assist people to overcome barriers to living life to the full, building on strengths to break the cycle of disadvantage, focus on early intervention and sustainable outcomes. We will continue to develop innovative responses which will improve peoples quality of life. We will influence government policy and strategic direction, strengthen partnerships, and advocate for justice and fairness in our society.

On a personal note: George Martin was a major influence in my career. I worked under his leadership in 1986 as the co-ordinator of the Youth Accommodation program. He encouraged me to gain a range of work experiences and to continue my study and after several years I returned in 1996. I have been in the CEO role for 10 years.

He taught me to be a problem solver – I would raise issues and he would want to discuss how I was going to solve them. We had some fun.

He would share stories to demonstrate his point of view. He was a humble man, full of humility, kindness and thoughtfulness. He was a quiet achiever – a community builder. He modelled how an organisation can be a part of community, - not doing to a community but working alongside the community.

He was a leader, mentor, and encourager. His values of justice, trust, integrity and sincerity have marked his leadership.

He knew his staff and community – he built a culture of respect, learning, values driven management, social justice. He had charisma and a dry sense of humour.

He has touched the lives of many, his spirit lives on, his legacy of serving those less advantaged in our society will continue to flourish.

He will always be remembered.

Our deepest condolences to Leonie and family. You will always be friends of our organisation.