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EDWARD SEYMOUR SHAW M.B.E. 1895 - 1968

"If you cannot agree - you can at least agree to disagree without being disagreeable" were words often expressed by Edward Seymour Shaw and are typical of the man.

Edward Seymour Shaw, known as Seymour, was born at the Anglican Rectory at Marulan in 1895 the fourth child of the Reverend A. Rutherford Shaw and Mary Emellia Shaw. He had an older sister Edna, who became well known as Matron Shaw, O.B.E., Matron of Crown Street Women's Hospital, two older brothers Fred and Arthur and younger brother and sister Harold and Ella.

His father served many years as an Anglican Minister at Marulan and was transferred firstly to Gundagai and then Gunning. Seymour's early schooling was in these areas. The family moved to Sydney in 1911 and he finished his education at Sydney C. of E. Grammar School. His first job was with an Insurance Company.

In 1915 he joined the AIF as a member of the Army Service Corps and twice volunteered for overseas duty but was kept in Australia until his discharge in 1919.

In 1919 he went in a real estate partnership in Cronulla and was later joined in this venture by his brother Fred.

Sydney remained the centre of his commercial activities but he had developed an inherent love of the Australian country side. His memories of his early years at Marulan and Gunning gave him a yearning to possess a section of this fine country he knew so well. In 1945 he purchased 'Rutherford' a property of 1104 acres of typical good sheep and cattle country. This property was managed by his son Jack who was regarded as one of Gunning's most successful farmers.

In 1948 he realised another ambition to own a property near the city when he purchased, along with his wife Marcella and her two sisters, Mt. Huon and Sugarloaf farms at Campbelltown. Mt. Huon was a property of 158 acres with a homestead over 100 years old and the adjoining "Sugarloaf" was 475 acres with a small homestead.

The family's Sydney home was 'Naburn' at Ewey Bay and the property ran from Attunga Road to the water's edge of Ewey Bay. (Yowie Bay).

His business interests included being Chairman of Hunt Bros. Parramatta, (a group of 8 companies), a position he relinquished in 1964.

It was his interest in Local Government for which Seymour Shaw is best remembered. It has been stated that 'although they are a much maligned body, councils have a major effect on the growth of an area, especially if they are made up of far-sighted men.' Seymour Shaw was one of these far sighted men and probably one of the most experienced men in Local Government in N.S.W.

He occupied for a time the highest office to which any Alderman/Councillor may aspire, that of Presidency of the Local Government Association in New South Wales.

He was also a member of
the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage Board;
the Local Government Clerks-Auditors and Engineers Examination Committees;
the Local Government Superannuation Board;
the Town and Country Planning Advisory Committee;
the Australian Body catering for the needs of Local Government throughout Australia.

He was a member of the Sutherland Shire Council for 26 years with only a short break of two months in 1929 when the whole Council stood down over the "Bridge Passes" affair. This matter arose over the issue to each Councillor of a Bridge Pass for use on the new toll bridge that Council had built over the Georges River at Tom Ugly's Point. It was held that by doing so the Councillors disqualified themselves. The main attacker in the matter was Smith's Weekly.

The Sutherland Shire Council recorded in 1938 appreciation of his services as President. This was in the form of a letter of appreciation for services as President 1930 - 1933 and 1935-38. He subsequently served two more terms as President, 1940 and 1944. A total of 9 terms as President.

His role in Local Government saw him participate in many Committees, often the Chairman of these, as well as carrying out the various duties of his office as President. In 1932 he welcomed the Governor, Sir Philip Game, when he visited the Shire.

Seymour Shaw did not contest the Council elections held in late 1948 on account of his career.

His time in Local Government covered the Depression Years, the Second World War and the post war period which saw the Sutherland Shire grow from a small rural district on the outskirts of Sydney to a thriving metropolis.

Seymour Shaw was known to say in the 1960's that 'Miranda will be the hub of the Shire' this was not easy to visualise at that time as Miranda was only starting the develop from an area of market gardens and poultry farms. Anyone who has seen the development of the current day Miranda has seen this prophecy come true.

After his retirement from Sutherland Shire Council he became one of the Council's real estate adviser and valuers.

The Sutherland Shire Council purchased an old nursery in the Boulevard, Miranda which was developed into a park and named the Seymour Shaw Park. It presently provides soccer fields, netball and tennis courts for the Shire's youth and residents. It is in a prime position in Miranda. Seymour Shaw met the cost of providing trees for the Park.

He was nominated to fill a vacancy on the Board of Fire Commissioners, the adjoining Councils of Hurstville and Kogarah supported his nomination for this Board in 1940.

Seymour Shaw played a vital role in the development of the Public Libraries. He served as President of the N.S.W. Branch of the Library Association of Australia; also as Hon. Treasurer of the Library Association of Australia.

He was honoured in 1950 by the Carnegie Corporation of New York for 'his long interest in Local Government, his relation to library development in N.S.W. and the position of influence which he holds.'

As a result of this recognition he travelled extensively through the United States of America and Canada as a guest of the Carnegie Corporation of New York for the purpose of investigating Local Government and Free Public Libraries.

He was a member of Parramatta Rotary Club and held the office of President of that Club. In 1950 he was elected Governor of 29 th District of Rotary International and was Chairman of the Extension Committee for Asia and A.N.Z.S.A.O (Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and other places. He was also an honorary member of Cronulla Rotary Club.

Seymour Shaw had a keen knowledge of Asian affairs and was President of the Australian Indonesian Association and a member of the Australian Council. In 1969 the E. Seymour Shaw Memorial Prize for Indonesian Studies was offered by the Australian Indonesian Association of New South Wales.

He was active also with the development of the Sutherland Hospital at Caringbah, including being President of the Hospital Board. In addition to monetary gifts to the Hospital he also donated the fountain at the front of the hospital.

He played a very active role in the life of St. Luke's Anglican Church, Miranda. He first became associated with St. Luke's in the 1920's when his father was rector of St. John's Sutherland. Early records show he was Rector's Warden in 1926 a position he held for over 40 years. He was Church Secretary/Treasurer, a Lay Reader, Parish Councillor, Synod Representative, it is also understood he knew every facet of Church Law and was able to steer the Parish over difficult problems.

He worked for 22 years to regain the strip of land fronting Jackson Ave. and Kingsway Miranda, which had been taken over by the Railways Department for a goods siding to carry stock along the old steam tram tracks to the Miranda Co-operative Store. He was able to see the land would be developed as a commercial site with a row of shops fronting the church property on the Kingsway. It was solely due to his efforts that the Church was able to recover the deeds in 1953 and plan the building of the Family Christian Centre on the present site.

He was the Chairman of St. Luke's Small Loans Co-operative, a Church based Credit Union in the early days of the Credit Union Movement.

It is largely due to his foresight and direction that St. Luke's Miranda enjoys a prime location surrounded by retail, commercial and high rise development of this thriving area.

During the royal Visit of 1954 Her Majesty, the Queen, invested Edward Seymour Shaw as a member of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

His sister, Matron Shaw received an O.B.E. in 1950.

As a result of his war service he maintained an active role in the RSL movement and was Patron of three local RSL Clubs as well as being active of various local war related committees during World War 2.

At a function given by The Sutherland Shire RSL Sub Branches Vigilance Committee in his honour the President of the Vigilance Committee said "The Sutherland Shire Vigilance Committee feels that your sterling service, rendered to ex-servicemen and women of both World Wars should not pass without some small recognition."

A list of the various organisations and committees in which he played an active part are attached to this paper.

In 1921 he married Effie G. Piper, who died in 1923.

In 1928 he married Marcella Palmes.

He had one son Jack. (R.W. Bro. J. Shaw P.A.G.M.)

Seymour Shaw died after a brief illness at his home Naburn, Ewey Bay, on 15 April 1968 at the age of 72. By request the service at the church and the crematorium were private.

In the several obituaries written of Seymour Shaw he was described as 'A man of determination who looked ahead with vision' St. Luke's Miranda 'Fingerpost'

'A hard working - kindly, public spirited Australian, ready at all times to give expression to his sincere good will to all mankind.' Shire and Municipal Record.

'The Shire and Australia have lost a man who devoted the greater part of his life to assisting others.' Local Newspaper

'The community, and in particular the Shire, has lost one of its most renowned sons.' Presidential Minute - President A.T. Gietzelt (later Senator Gietzelt).

"If he had been born a century earlier there is little doubt Edward Seymour Shaw would have gone down in Australian history as one of our greatest pioneers" St. George & Sutherland Shire Leader.

His Masonic Career is as follows -

Joined Lodge Oxford No. 85 U.G.L. on N.S.W. on 19 February 1920 at the age of 24.

Called off on 16 June 1921.

Joined Lodge Cronulla No. 312 U.G.L. of N.S.W. on 1 April 1921, Worshipful Master in 1927-28. Resigned 1 March 1934.

Foundation Member of Lodge Gowrie No. 651 U.G.L. of N.S.W. on 19 December 1936 and called off on 19 April 1946.

References

Local Studies Section Sutherland Shire Council

Archives of St. Luke's Anglican Church, Miranda

The Families and Properties of Edward Seymour Shaw by E.S. Shaw.

Edward Seymour Shaw M.B.E.

Organisations and committees in which E.S. Shaw played an active role.

Councillor Sutherland Shire Council 26 years
President Sutherland Shire Council 9 times
President Local Government Association of N.S.W.
Member Local Government Clerk's and Auditors Examination Committee
Member Local Government Engineer's Examination Committee
Member of Library Board of N.S.W.
Hon. Treasurer of Library Association of Australia
President N.S.W. Branch of Library Association of Australia
Member Local Government Superannuation Board
Member Town & Country Planning Advisory Committee
Member Australian Council of Local Government Associations
District Member M.W.S. & Drainage Board
Life Governor of Crown St. Women's Hospital
Chairman Sutherland Shire District Hospital Board
Chairman Woronora General Cemetery & Cremation Trust
President Miranda School of Arts
Patron Cronulla Sub Branch of R.S.S. & A.I.L. of Australia
Patron Miranda Sub Branch of R.S.S. & A.I.L. of Australia
Patron Sutherland Ex-Servicemen's Club
Chairman of Sutherland War Loans Committee
Secretary & Treasurer St. Luke's C. of E. Miranda
Synod Representative for the Parish
Rector's Warden St. Luke's C. of E. Miranda
Chairman St. Luke's Small Loans Co-operative
Vice President of the Recreation & Leadership movement
President Sutherland Shire Repatriation Committee
Member Royal National Park Trust
President Parramatta Rotary Club
Governor of 29th District Rotary International
President Australian Indonesian Association
Member of Asian Council
Chairman of the Extension Committee for Asia and ANZSAO
Member Technical Education Advisory Council
Director of Thomas Holt Homes
Trustee of the David R. Kirkby Scholarship Fund.
Y.M.C.A. Movement
Chairman & Managing Director of Hunt Bros. Parramatta and several important Public Companies.

