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Bro. HAROLD HAMPTON HARDWICK - An outstanding sportsman.

One of Australia's greatest all round athletes, Harold Hardwick won one gold and two bronze medals in Olympic swimming events and two gold medals, one in swimming and one in boxing, at the Festival of the Empire. He represented New South Wales in Rugby Union, was professional heavyweight boxing champion of Australia and an outstanding surfer. He was named Australian Sportsman of the Year and the Ideal Sportsman of the Empire.

Harold Hardwick was born on 14th December 1888 at Balmain, the son of George and Priscilla Hardwick. He learnt to swim at an early age and was taught Dick Cavill's new crawl stroke and also the trudgen stroke for longer distances. Having been taught boxing from the age of 10 Hardwick swam in the Summer and boxed in the Winter.

At the age of 11 he was winning swimming races and as a 16 year old at Fort Street High School old he became public schools' champion of Sydney. In the All Schools' Championships of Australasia he came second to his schoolmate, L. Murray. At the same school he played in the first fifteen and captained the winning lifesaving team.

He had intended to study dentistry but the death of his father halted that idea and he left school, became an apprentice engraver and later an accountant.

He began regular training under W. W. Hill and joined the Enterprise Swimming Club and in 1907-08 won the 100 yards State freestyle style in 1 min. 01.6 secs defeating Alec Wickham. In the following season he won the State 100, 220 & 300 yards titles as well as the three quarter and mile championships.

In 1909 at the Sydney Domain Baths as the representative of New South Wales in the Australasian Championships he came second in the 100 yards, second in the 880 and 440 yards events to Frank Beaurepaire. He also came third in the 220 yards and in February won the mile championship of New South Wales.

In the year 1911 he was really at his best, winning three Australian titles, the 220 yards in 2 min 36.6 secs., 440 in 5 min 35 secs. and 880 yards in 12 min 17 secs. He then went on to represent Australasia at The Festival of Empire Sports of 1911 at London. This was held in conjunction with the coronation of King George 5th. Australasia, (Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania), Canada, South Africa and England sent teams to contest five events in athletics, two in swimming and one each in boxing and wrestling. This festival was the forerunner of the Empire Games which were first held in 1930 in Hamilton, Canada.

Harold Hardwick won the 110 yards freestyle in 1 min .06 secs. and also won the Empire Heavyweight Title, knocking out both opponents in the first round. Having been boxing since the age of 12 years he was now 1.8 cms. tall and a very fit 23 year old. Hardwick travelled to London on the S.S. India, commanded by Captain Gordon, the ship on which

Bro. R.L. (Snowy) Baker had sailed for London for the 1908 Olympic Games so there was already a gymnasium on the ship. The Referee of 12th July 1911 reported "Hardwick wins two Empire championships, 100 yards swimming and the heavyweight boxing, being Australia's only successful competitor and that he has decided not to run in the 1 mile event."

The Referee of 26th July 1911 reported that "Hardwick had a win in the 100 metres event in Germany and a second in the 400 metres event in the same country."

Following the Festival of Sports Hardwick went on to win the 100, 220 and 440 yards English Swimming Championships. On his return home he was named "Australian Sportsman of the Year"

The 1912 Olympic Games were held in Stockholm and Hardwick won gold in the 4 x 200 metres freestyle relay with Cecil Healy, Malcolm Champion and Leslie Boardman. He also won bronze in the 400 metres and 1500 metres freestyle events. Interestingly these games were the first and only time that boxing was not included in the competition

Following the Olympic Games Hardwick decided to restrict himself to interclub championships and team events. He became a foundation member of the Manly Surf Club Team that won the Surf Teams Championships in 1913. He played First Grade Rugby Union for six years, being a member of the Eastern Suburbs Premiership side of 1913. He was now competing in rugby, swimming, boxing, gymnastics, water polo and surfing. He played for New South Wales in a rugby match against a visiting American universities.

In 1913 Hardwick won the New South Wales amateur heavyweight boxing championship before turning professional in 1915 under the promotion of Bro. R.L. (Snowy) Baker. He fought eight times, winning four and being knocked out in the seventh round in his last fight by Les Darcy on 19th February 1916. This was very strongly fought and in the third round Hardwick broke two of Les Darcy's teeth. Les Darcy picked up the pieces and they were riveted back to the stumps by a dentist the next day. It is well recorded that Les Darcy died in the U.S.A. on 24th May 1917 of blood poisoning and two of Darcy's biographers suggest it may well have been a result of infection following the teeth repair

Harold Hardwick enlisted in the A.I.F. 25th on August 1917 and was a Sapper in the No. 2 Signal Squadron in the Middle East. After the war in April 1919 he was one of more than 400 competitors at the Inter-Theatre of War Boxing Tournament held at Aldershot, England where he won the heavyweight boxing title. He was chosen by his fellow competitors as the "Ideal Sportsman" and was awarded a cup for the honour. Inter-Allied Games were then held in France and the Australian team won the 800 metres relay with Harold Hardwick as a member. He returned to Australia and was discharged on 14th October 1919.

In 1920 Hardwick commenced with the Dept. of Education as Supervisor of Swimming and organised many holiday swimming schools in the State. The Sydney Morning Herald of 10th December 1920 reported that "Harold Hardwick had been refused re-instatement as an amateur" so he retired from competitive sport and concentrated on his Education Dept. position of swimming organiser. In 1938 he directed the schoolchildren's display at Australia's 150th Anniversary Celebrations. He retired as Deputy Director of Physical Education in February 1953.

In 1921 he had been commissioned in the Militia and transferred to the Reserve of Officers in April 1942. His funeral notice in the Sydney Morning Herald of 24th February 1959 recorded him as having the rank of Colonel. In October 1945 he married Maud Hopper who survived him on his death from a coronary occlusion on 22nd February 1959. He was foundation president in 1949 and life member from 1952 of the Union of Old Swimmers. The Harold Hardwick Memorial trophy was inaugurated by the Union of Old Swimmers in 1960.

His name was retrospectively inscribed on the Helms Trophy in Los Angeles, United States of America. He is commemorated in the Sport Australia Hall of Fame and in the Harold Hardwick Memorial Trophy awarded annually to the winner of the 100 metres schoolboys' title. It is engraved "In memory of a great sportsman, soldier and gentleman." As mentioned above Harold Hampton Hardwick died on 22nd February 1959.

A note on the "Ideal sportsman award made in 1919.

Conditions drawn up were as follows:

1. He must play the game for the sake of the game.
2. He must play for his side and not for himself.
3. He must be a good loser and a good winner. He must be modest in victory and generous in defeat.
4. He must accept all decisions in a proper spirit.
5. He must be chivalrous towards a defeated opponent.
6. He must be unselfish, and always ready to help others in every possible way to become proficient in sport.
7. He must be a cheerful comrade.

Harold Hampton Hardwick was initiated on 5th April 1924, passed on 5th July 1924 and raised on 4th October 1924 in Lodge King of Tyre, No. 457 U.G.L. of N.S.W. He called off from that lodge on 1st August 1925 and became a foundation member and steward of Lodge Imperial, No. 579, U.G.L. of N.S.W. on 17th February 1926, serving as Worshipful Master in 1933-1934. He called off from that Lodge on 13th August 1953.

Ref: Aust. Dict. of Biography.

Aussie Gold, The Story of Australia at the Olympics, Reet & Max Howell, 1988
Lanes of Gold, 100 Years of the N. S. W. Amateur Swimming Association,

Alan Clarkson

Referee, 12,26 July, 16 Aug. 1911

S.M.H., 10 Dec. 1920, 24 Feb. 1959.

Records of the U.G.L. of N.S.W. & A.C.T.



DEAR SIR,

On the occasion of your resigning your membership of the SYDNEY SWIMMING CLUB we desire you to accept this address as a token of the esteem and affection in which you are held by the members of your old CLUB. Your long membership of this body has always been distinguished by an unselfish devotion to the interests of the CLUB.

Your many services both in the competitive and managerial branches of the sport have been great factors in advancing the SYDNEY SWIMMING CLUB to its present premier position.

Your manly conduct and sportsmanlike behaviour at all times whilst representing your Club, State, and Commonwealth at home and abroad has endeared you to all sportsmen whom you have come in contact. We wish you every Prosperity Happiness & Success in the future.

*Yours truly,
H. Hardwick
A. Wilson
H. Hardwick*

The Sydney Swimming Club acknowledges Harold Hardwick's contribution to the club



Harold Hardwick . . . a long history of athletic achievement