



THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

RECEIVED
10 FEB 2004
BY:

PAPER NO. 105

PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY: G.H. CUMMING

DATE: 19 January 2004

**Bro. SIR DAVIS HUGHES Kt.
(1910 - 2003)**

Sir Davis Hughes, best remembered as the politician who clashed with Danish architect Joern Utzon, was born at Sheffield, Tasmania, the eldest of seven children in a devout Baptist family.

He later lived with his grandmother so that he could attend Launceston High School. He enjoyed sport and was cox of the school four, played cricket and Australian Rules football and proudly boasted that he played with the legendary Roy "Up there" Cazaly.

He was forced to give up surfing at age 71 after being temporarily paralysed and in hospital for eight weeks after a severe dumping. He also took a keen interest in horse racing and was still studying the form of runners in Sydney and Melbourne the day before he died.

After leaving school, Hughes attended Teachers' College in Tasmania and introduced problem-based, student focused learning at Devonport High School in the 1930's, thirty years before it was begun in NSW schools.

When the Second World War began, he joined the RAAF education service where he taught psychology. He was discharged in 1945 with the rank of squadron leader and established a visual education business selling projectors and films Australia-wide.

In 1947, he accepted a teaching position at Armidale School in NSW.

Hughes took an interest in politics and, in 1950, he won the NSW seat of Armidale for the Country Party (later the National Party). He was Party Leader for a brief period at the end of the 1950's.

In May 1965, the Labor government in NSW was defeated by the Liberal-Country Party coalition with Bro. Robin (later Sir Robert) Askin as Premier. Davis Hughes was appointed Minister for Public Works.

His portfolios included the construction of the Sydney Opera House.

The Opera House affair began in 1954 when the Joe Cahill Labor government decided to build a music centre on the site of the disused Fort Macquarie tram depot at Bennelong Point.

The next step was an international architectural competition for an Opera House (actually a concert hall which could also be used for opera and a multi-purpose hall).

