

Sports journalist Trevor Grant dies, aged 65

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March 6 2017 - 5:59PM

Trevor Grant, who died on Sunday, was brave in everything he did. As a sports journalist for 40 years, he took the mission of speaking truth to power more to heart than any of his kind. At media briefings, he was invariably front and centre, asking the hard questions, and not in the least intimidated by any of the hard men he was confronting. Some heads are still shaking now. His writing had the same direct quality, but was also elegant and beautifully crafted, a rare combination. The byline alone told you the story would be worth reading.



Trevor Grant

After retiring early from journalism, Grant – Shorty, or Shortarse to all – took his zeal and compassion in a new direction, as an activist for the disenfranchised and downtrodden. He worked on behalf of refugees, especially from Sri Lanka, and wrote a book on atrocities in their homeland, *Sri Lanka's Secrets – How the Rajapaksa regime gets away with Murder*. Geoffrey Robertson wrote the foreword. In 2013, the former cricket writer led a movement to boycott the Sri Lankan cricket team in Australia.

Grant tackled other improprieties; for instance, poker machines in the AFL. Periodically, he turned up in the letters pages of the papers he once graced as a journalist. On air, in print or in person, always one quality shone through, that authorities were not going to get away with it.

His last challenge was cancer. In 2015, aged just 63, he was diagnosed with mesothelioma, the asbestos cancer, almost certainly from decades of working in two newspaper offices. While undergoing sometimes gruelling treatment, he pursued the media companies for damages and wrote and spoke about his plight, not in self-pity, but so that others might understand and be emboldened. The injustice hurt more than the cancer. But on Sunday, he succumbed, aged just 65.

Grant, one of three brothers, was born in 1951. He went to Hampton High and began in journalism as a copy boy and cadet at the short-lived afternoon paper *Newsday* in 1969. He soon showed his talent with a front page story on Vain, the champion racehorse. When *Newsday* closed the next year, he moved to

the *Sporting Globe*, then *The Herald* (both now defunct). After an enterprising stint in England, he returned to work for *The Age* until 1989 then for the *Herald Sun* until 2009. He wrote brilliantly about AFL, cricket, golf and racing, indeed on any topic where there was a story to be told or a wrong to be righted.

He was a boon companion on cricket tours, without ever allowing himself to be lulled. In Pakistan in 1988, for instance, his hard line against the machinations of team management would rebound on him for years. He had no regrets, nor was he shaken in his stance.

He was an avid and capable golfer, though of course yearned always to be more capable; he could not have been more avid. He was also a fervent Collingwood supporter and a selector of their team of the century, but there are plenty of Collingwood people to tell you that he never let his love of the Magpies get in the way of his journalistic integrity.

He had the utmost respect of his peers and elders, and was warm and solicitous towards all colleagues, and so had a wide circle of friends. For them all, this is a sad day.

Grant accepted that he was dying, saying it comes to everyone, but to him sooner rather than later, and so until the end he displayed astonishing equanimity about it. That did not mean that was any easier for him than anyone else. It just meant that he approached dying the same way he approached living, with all the courage he had. He is survived by a son, Matthew, and a daughter, Caroline.

A memorial service will be held at Woodlands Golf Club in Mordialloc at 2pm on Friday.