

## Keith Collyer - RLTA Life Member 1st February 2014



At the recent Annual General Meeting, one of our most endearing members, 83 year old Keith Collyer, was honoured with Life Membership of the RLTA.



*RLTA President Les Finney congratulating Keith Collyer on his Life Membership of the Club*

Keith, with his offsider Pat Cleary, are the official honorary Caretakers/Groundsmen of our RLTA court complex and have been ensuring that we all enjoy clean, neat and well-groomed tennis courts for the past 10 years or so. Like the other volunteers that keep our club functioning, their only reward is the recognition we bestow and the satisfaction they get from a job well done.

A very handy tennis player in his younger days, Keith was a member of a premiership winning team in the Brisbane Metropolitan competition in 1953, and still had the trophy on his mantle-piece until a couple of years ago. However, Keith's involvement with our club goes back to late last century just after he had lost Val, his wife and best friend of 41 years. When he joined the Redlands Lawn Tennis club, his cheeky yet charming personality was the catalyst that quickly created a supporting network of new friends.

He was also quick to make his presence felt at the RLTA. In his first year, Keith partnered the legendary Edna Finney to win the Seniors week tournament held annually at our club. As Keith puts it, the secret to success in doubles is to get a good partner.

Keith was always willing to put his hand up to help out with anything that contributed to the improvement of the club and its surrounds. It is not commonly known, but back in 2003, Keith and his good friend Jack Finney planted the 50 trees providing the wind-break along our northern border. A few younger members provided the muscle, the mid-week ladies provided the young trees, but it was definitely the blessing and tender loving care of Keith

and Jack that ensured we would enjoy such a wonderful northern backdrop and wind buffer for our centre. Ironically, as the court caretaker, Keith has been cursing the never-ending leaves that fall from these trees and find their way onto the courts.

Nevertheless, 2003 was an exciting time for our club as the tree-planting was one of the first projects in the major redevelopment of our site. With the subsequent construction of the new clubhouse in 2004, Keith was quick to put his hand up to volunteer his services to ensure the centre had a groundsman with the motivation and skills that the redeveloped centre deserved.

In the past decade Keith has become an integral part of the RLTA family. He has even moved abode to be closer to where he spends his spare time. His contributions to the club not only include his role as caretaker, but he has been an avid supporter of the junior tennis and runs the Tuesday and Thursday morning veterans social tennis. Nowadays, he has a new workshop ("Keith's Castle"), lots of new toys (including a bright red tractor), a lawn that was planted at his request and that he takes great pleasure in mowing way too often, and a chalk board on which he shares his weekly "thoughts of the day". His face may not be the most handsome around the club, but it is certainly the most recognisable. Even his charm with the ladies has earned him many a heart-felt hug.

In late 2012, as a fitting tribute to his role in the redevelopment and maintenance of the RLTA centre, Keith along with Club Patron Lena Bandiera, officiated in the opening of our new Court Nine, the last piece of the decade-long redevelopment jigsaw. And in recognition of his efforts and his on-going commitment, it seems only fitting that the RLTA has bestowed on him this latest honour of Life Membership.



*Official opening Court 9: (l to r) Keith Collyer, State MP Mark Robinson, Club Patron Lena Bandiera*



*Keith the Caretaker - 2005*



*Pat Cleary & Keith Collyer at work*



*Keith presenting trophies to the pollios*



*Keith the toothless tiger*



*Keith playing with his toys*



*Keith - a charmer with the ladies*