

In memory of Dave Feickert, by Rod Trott  
*Rod's eulogy at Dave Feickert's funeral.*

I am honoured to have the opportunity to say a few words in the memory of my mate David Gordon Feickert "Dave " as we all knew him.

My thoughts will largely cover the time from when Dave moved back to live in Wanganui some 7/8 years ago.

Actually I first met Dave in the 1960's when we were both boys in boats on our beloved Whanganui River. In this case it was rowing eights and Dave was in a very strong crew stroked if my memory serves me right by the late Sir Paul Callaghan and Dave's brother Peter was also there. Both impressed as exactly the sort of guys you would pick first for your rowing 8.

There is a well respected quote about the art of 8 oar rowing "where is the spiritual value of rowing ?? The losing of self entirely to the co-operative effort of the crew as a whole."  
Dave's life I believe embodied this spiritual value and in addition to losing the self interest to co-operative effort he was also a leader.

From these wonderfully carefree times we went our different ways and we did not meet up until we both moved back to Wanganui over the course of the past two decades.

One of the first things that struck me about Dave was his level of kindness. I don't know whether there are members of the Boswell family here today. If so they will surely attest to Dave's incredible level of kindness to your father also Dave.  
I don't whether old Dave is here but he will be here in spirit.

Old Dave is nearly a hundred and our Dave here today died at 67...[not old; too young-] not fair.

But Dave knew that often life wasn't fair and no doubt this was one of the reasons he dedicated his working life to the labour movement in UK; China; New Zealand and places beyond.

In our times when life is complicated., work is hard and even play is not easy. Dave applied himself to the safety and health of his fellow men and women.

.And as a man for the big challenge, there could be few who could face more daunting challenges than working to bring down the death rates and deal with the mayhem from those deaths, whether it be in China or at Pike River, New Zealand.

An incredibly stressful mission .for life. Very!

Dave was a Quaker and absolutely embodied the core values of the Quaker movement and applied them in his work in the labour movement.

Those values are worth re-stating:

**Simplicity**

[Using financial and natural resources carefully]

**Peace**

[build conflict resolution skills via effective communication and alternatives to violence]

**Integrity**

[Let your life speak ; your outer life reflects your inner life.]

**Community**

[Connect with all members of the community]

**Equality**

[Respect different people and different ideas]

**Stewardship**

Protect and care for the Earth in a sacred trust]

Dave applied these qualities of simplicity; peace; integrity ; community ; equality and stewardship in a focused and forceful way back in Whanganui. For example, his chairmanship and work on the Whanganui River Institute Trust was outstanding. As a trustee, Dave applied the values I refer to above in a focused and determined way. His work with Michael Poa, and the other members of the *waka ama* community, in re-establishing the Pacific outrigger *waka ama* on the Whanganui River was to me, and many others, an outstanding example of his skills and absolute commitment to positive projects.

Dave's skills as a commentator on issues of community importance were widely known; respected and very rarely challenged . He was an opinion former in the best sense of that phrase Between his life and work here was also commuting to China both to continue his work on coal mine safety with is much loved wife and companion Jing.

In 2009, Dave was awarded the Friendship Prize for Foreign experts awarded by the People's Republic of China one of two awarded to New Zealanders that year. There were 10 000 nominees. I think, my friends, that is a very big deal. Dave indeed was an expert in his chosen calling.

Sadly his other occupation on his trips to China was his treatment with Chinese Traditional medicine. As many will know Dave had been diagnosed with liver cancer in the mid 1900s . This started a nearly 20-year battle with the disease.

He wrote about it the experience in a very interesting way but rarely talked about it. I think of Dave as a private and proud man, and his dying reflected this.

He was proud particularly of his daughter Sonja and his wife Jing.

He chose to die very privately and he reflected to me when we had our final walk around the beautiful Virginia Lake some six months ago that after 19 years of battling Cancer he had “had enough” of people telling him of new treatments and he felt like a dead man walking. So sadly for us he withdrew more and more until he past away peacefully in the Wanganui Hospice last Wednesday.

So we say to Sonja and her family and Jing and Dave’s brothers and sisters Alison Jan,, Peter and Max and their extended families, we share your grief in Dave’s passing.

We are better for having known him.

Finally, and this is a quote from a rower Dave met one Rob Waddell:

“If success in life is measured by the positive influence you have had on other people’s lives then your life, Dave, was a life extremely well lived.”

Dave was –appropriately– a staunch member of the Union Boat Club [formed 1877] immediately on learning of Dave’s death the President Patrick Carroll dispatched the following message ‘It is my sad duty to inform you of the passing away of Dave Feickert. . Dave was the immediate past Vice President of the Union Boat Club. A generous and knowledgeable man locally; nationally and internationally.

He always treated everyone as equal regardless of race, creed or status.

All round good guy; we will miss him.

It was Dave’s wish to be cremated and for his ashes to be placed on an outgoing tide and the Union would be honoured to participate in this final action.