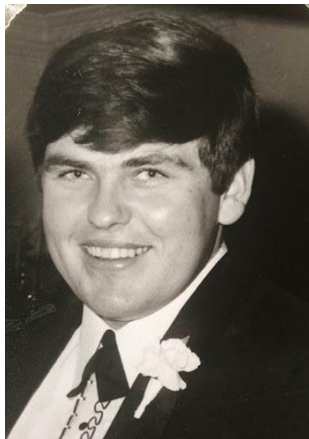


CARL ADRIAN MCKAY



MCKAY Carl Adrian 7619 (1959–67) GR
McKay Company Director Carlingford;
Prep, Bur, Macq, Cdt. Equipment Operator.
Adrian McKay Memorial Prize for Grade
Five Handicraft at the Preparatory School
endowed by his parents. 13/04/1973 [15]

Born 14 October 1949 Sydney, NSW

Died 13 May 1973 Sydney, NSW

Growing up, Adrian, as he was known at home and to all his friends, would have seen his paternal grandfather and father in and around construction equipment as the family was in the earthmoving and construction business at that time. They, as we will see, would have a major influence on his life.

Adrian started King's at the Prep in 1959, after starting school initially at Trinity when the family lived at Burwood. He followed his older brother Robert (OB 1957 to 1965) into the Prep then onto Burkitt and Macquarie houses, both as day boys. His sister Carolyn remembers growing up at Carlingford and that, for Adrian, King's was an enjoyable experience where he had a valued circle of friends and involved himself in many school activities. She also saw that he was an altruistic and a congenial person who could relate to people with warmth and understanding. These skills assisted him throughout school and beyond.

In the cadets, Robert remembers an incident when Adrian was on bivouac at the Singleton camp one December. He was on guard duty with his rifle and blank ammunition. In the boredom of the long night he accidentally touched the trigger of the rifle and not a soul was left asleep after the deafening sound of gunfire! The boys were sure they were under attack.

In his teenage years, Adrian could always be found tinkering with a car or truck or rebuilding a motor and showed great aptitude for mechanical work. He also enjoyed helping out on the family's grazing properties. One of his close friends described him as a generous person, 'the glue in the fabric' of their peer group. Every weekend the boys would arrange an outing or an afternoon in someone's backyard repairing a vehicle. The Head of the River was a favourite where the group decorated their cars. Adrian's army-green Holden ute became an icon.



L to R; Chris Jackson, Keith Hills, Adrian McKay, David Mitchell



After leaving school Adrian briefly worked in earthmoving where he was competent with the bulldozer and grader and left his mark on sites such as the Windsor High School oval and the M1/F3 freeway. He decided that the earthmoving industry was not for him, so he moved into a mechanical career where initially he undertook a mechanical engineering course at TAFE.

Along with men from the armed forces, he was chosen to participate in a select group to study High Performance and Diagnostic Engine Tuning. Adrian was placed 1st in the course. He served his apprenticeship at Borgman's Service Station at Epping. After completing his apprenticeship, he was offered a managerial position, but turned it down after deciding he wanted to manage his own business.

In 1970, not yet 21, he entered into a contract with BP and ran a successful BP Service Station at Ermington. This business thrived. He soon had eight men working for him including mechanics and driveway assistants.

His fascination with the perfection of High Performance engines and Diagnostic Tuning led Adrian into development and experimental work rather than basic maintenance and repairs. His family could see that he was engrossed in the development of high performance engines. Adrian observed that the basic ignition system available at the time was the weakness in the petrol engine, so he began designing and building new ignition systems that could be easily retro-fitted. Motor car clubs and enthusiasts soon began seeking these electronic conversion systems.

All of this potential ended suddenly when Adrian died as a result of a car accident on 13 April 1973. He was only 23.

Contributors:

Carolyn McKenzie (sister), Robert McKay (brother), Keith Hills, Dianne Jackson-Matthews, Rodney Hammett, David Payne
Family photos – Carolyn McKenzie

Macquarie House 1966

