

Resolution of Council

22 February 2021

Item 3.2

Vale Terry Murphy

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

I pay tribute to the life of Terence Joseph Murphy, former Sydney City Council alderman, Erskineville local champion and Labor stalwart who passed away on 8 January 2021.

Terry Murphy was born on 18 October 1931 at 78 Albert Street, Erskineville, the house in which he spent most of his life.

One of nine children of a Catholic family, Terry was the son who accepted the responsibility of caring for his parents Margaret and Joseph in their later lives.

He was educated at St Mary's Primary school in Erskineville and later Christian Brothers, Lewisham. After leaving school Terry held several jobs including several years working for Sydney City Council. He became active in his trade union and soon became an organiser for the Australian Workers Union where he covered workers in the cement industries of South Sydney and White Bay.

Terry joined the Labor Party in 1947 and was elected secretary of Erskineville Labor in 1956, a position he held for over four decades. In 1969, along with his sister Maureen Oliver, he was elected to South Sydney Council as an Alexandria Ward Alderman. This began almost two decades working tirelessly representing his local community and earned him the nickname "Mr Erskineville".

Two years later, he faced his greatest challenge, campaigning against the proposed demolition of Erskineville by the Askin Liberal Government. This successful campaign is honoured by Green Bans Park in Erskineville, opened in 1998.

As Alderman, Terry became a local fixture every Saturday morning presiding from a park bench opposite Erskineville Town Hall where he would meet locals and discuss problems.

Having been forced to surrender his pony at the age of 12, and having never learnt to drive, he would often be seen walking inner city neighbourhoods, visiting constituents, attending work sites and community meetings, or as a messenger for Westpac. His quick step and determined stride earning him his second nick name “the Road Runner” which stayed with him for the rest of his life.

I got to know Terry and Maureen after I was elected to South Sydney City Council in 1980.

After retiring from Council, Terry remained active in his local community and in the campaigns to save Erskineville Public School and the Erskineville Housing estate. He served on several Council committees and was heavily involved in the South Sydney Social Plan, the 1997 South Sydney Local Environmental Plan and South Sydney Community Transport. He was a board member of South Sydney Community Aid and served for many years as Chair of Newtown Neighbourhood Centre. He was a recipient of three Community Service Awards by Council.

In recent years Terry spent long periods of time in the care of his nephew and his family in Queensland.

While he was short in stature, no one could ever accuse Terry of being small. He led a large and long life dedicated to his local community, a community which remembers him with deep affection.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor

Moved by the Chair (the Lord Mayor), seconded by Councillor Scott –

(A) Council note:

- (i) Terence (Terry) Joseph Murphy, a former Sydney Labor Councillor, sadly passed away on 8 January 2021;
- (ii) Terry, born in 1931, was a lifelong Erskineville resident and respected member of his community. He was a dedicated member of the Labor Party who believed deeply in serving his community and doing what was best for them;
- (iii) Terry served as an Alderman for the Alexandria Ward of the former South Sydney Council from 1982 to 1987 before being elected to the City of Sydney Council;
- (iv) Terry was a passionate, hardworking and reliable man, who cared deeply about helping his local community. During his years as an Alderman, Terry would spend his weekends sitting at a bus stop and talking with local residents about their concerns; and
- (v) the commitment that Terry displayed to his community is one we can all learn from and use to guide our own actions;

(B) all persons present observe one minute’s silence to mark the life of Terence Joseph Murphy;

- (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to Terry Murphy's family expressing the City's condolences; and
- (D) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
 - (i) consult with Terry Murphy's family about a memorial in Erskineville which recognises the contribution of Terry Murphy to his local community; and
 - (ii) report back to Councillors via the CEO Update on the consultation about any proposed memorial, inclusive of any budget implications.

Carried unanimously.

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Note – All those present at the meeting, held remotely, observed a minute's silence in memory of Terry Murphy.