

## **Douglas Evin Zoch**

When the new Headmaster arrived at St Patrick's College in 1979, he discovered that Br Evin Zoch had more responsibilities than anyone, and certainly more than any one person could effectively manage.

However, Evin in his generosity and willingness to serve, attempted valiantly to teach a range of subjects to his Form II class, act as Co-ordinator of Forms I and II, manage the text book sales for the Melbourne company that the College then used, organise the Exeat bus system for Boarders' home journeys, serve as Quarter Master for the Cadet Unit, coach of the Under 14 football team in the local district competition in which his teams were unbeaten, oversee the maintenance of the College vehicle fleet, move irrigation pipes for the College ovals, and manage the Form III Dormitory.

Most of these responsibilities were soon reassigned to others, but Evin was always willing to take on new ones. There was not a slack bone in his body.

In guiding and caring for the boys of his dormitory, he was splendid. He would ensure that there was always something to do, so that boys did not feel lonely, but rather engaged and doing things with others. His boys exhibited a clear loyalty to their dormitory and their Dormitory Master.

How did this dynamo of a man emerge?

Douglas Ambrose was born to Philip and Eileen Zoch on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1934. He was the fourth child, following Kevin, Ronald, and Patricia. They lived in North Fitzroy and later in Preston.

His parents and three siblings, predeceased him. Evin is survived by nieces and nephews and his sister-in-law, Shirley. On the occasion of the death of one of his siblings in 1990, Evin spoke at the funeral service as a family man, an emotional brother with deep family love. It was a perspective of Evin that most hadn't seen before.

Young Doug went to school at Clifton Hill with the Christian Brothers. Inspired by the Brothers who taught him., he headed to the Juniorate in Strathfield NSW in 1949 at a relatively young age.

There he was made a Table Prefect at an earlier age than usual – he was tall, focussed and dependable, and could be relied on to do the right thing.

But in the Novitiate he was given a very challenging time from the novice master, but he weathered this period and developed an inner strength, a self-reliant independence and a commitment to duty.

After training, he was assigned to St Monica's Moonee Ponds – where I first saw him. It was my first year at St Bernard's where the Brothers from St Monica's lived and I observed on most days this purposeful young Brother coming back for lunch and returning soon after – I didn't know who he was then.

Evin became an effective teacher. After eight years of Primary teaching, he moved into Technical Education and taught in the four Brothers' Technical Schools in Victoria: South Melbourne, Abbotsford,

Geelong and Ballarat. He attended RMIT for evening classes and qualified in woodwork. There was a squash court at Abbotsford which he utilised well. It was rare for an opponent to take a point off him.

His attention to detail and a good sense of discipline gave him skills in encouraging the young in their development of practical skills and a wide technical knowledge. He inspired new teachers to the profession.

In both South Melbourne & Ballarat, he was in charge for a while but found this responsibility difficult. He could be quite strict with the boys and overly directive with the staff. He worked extremely hard in each of the schools as finances were very challenging. He spent a lot of time raising funds through the sale of used newspapers in South Melbourne and bottle drives in Ballarat. Through these activities he developed good relationships with the parent groups and the students saw him in a different light.

Most of his teaching years - 38 in fact – were given to St Patrick's College. This period began in 1977 and he gave an exceptional period of his life to those he was associated with – students, staff, and families. He had a keen eye for any teachers who were struggling, especially new ones, to whom he offered his support.

As earlier mentioned, he assumed so many responsibilities and enabled the College to function remarkably smoothly and safely. With well over 200 boarders at its peak, ensuring that all were where they should be was not easy. Evin would wander the grounds at night, carrying out minor tasks, like turning lights and taps off, making sure doors were locked, that sprinklers were operating properly. But his presence kept boarders where they should be. He was known to some as *Mr Ubiquitous*, he was everywhere. He would see needs that others didn't or didn't want to, and do them without being asked. Today probably 4 or 5 people would carry out what he did.

On the day of an historic Walkathon to the Dowling Forest Racecourse, 800 boys were setting out for the return walk to the College, when each was given an orange. Generous but short-sighted organisers didn't foresee the peels of 800 oranges littering the roadside for over a kilometre. Evin saw the wreckage, recruited the members of his dormitory, set off in the truck and in no time with his eager helpers had cleared the debris, averting a PR disaster.

Responsibility for conducting the Ballarat Public Schools Athletics was rotated between the schools. When St Patrick's turn came, the organiser asked for someone to look after the movement and adjustment of the hurdles; quite a task as the heights had to be adjusted for every age group as did the distance between them. Evin volunteered and trained his dormitory team. On the day, this team emerged in their College spray jackets looking most professional and carried out the operation precisely. The Headmasters of all the schools were so impressed. They asked for this team when their turn came. We named the team *The Zochettes*.

Evin was a fair dinkum Brother. No frills or adulations for Evin; he just quietly went about what was needed to be done and it would be done with efficiency and little fuss. Tasks like collecting left over books, pens and pencils at the end of Term which he then sent to the homework centres for refugees or loading the truck with all the Brothers' holidays needs and driving to Apollo Bay – only to return immediately to have the College to himself; a contemplative who loved his own company, with his jobs and cross words.

Evin moved to Nazareth House in 2016, being the last Brother to leave St Patrick's College. His old friend, the catering manager at St Patrick's for forty years, Joe Phyland, moved to Nazareth House at about the same time. They kept an eye out for each other. Evin lived independently, relaxed and began to enjoy life a lot more. He contributed to the community in small ways such as emptying bins when needed and bringing in residents newspapers. The Retirement and Aged Care community at Nazareth House was his home until his death.

He was very well cared for here, for which we are grateful.

May his generous and dedicated soul rest in peace.

**Bill Wilding**  
**2 October 2022**