

Chandra Chithravelu Sandrasegara (1936–2014)



in 1974 and began practice at the bar in Sydney and he was still in active practice when he died a mere 40 years later. That in itself is a great achievement. He had a wide range of work in that time including criminal cases, family law cases and latterly mainly personal injury cases. He was a natural champion of the underdog, full of feeling and sympathy. One rule of law he was certain existed, even though it was not to be found in a text book, was that the underdog should always win. By that he meant his underdog. He always tried hard but he was as much compassionate as passionate. That coupled with his friendly courteous manner made him enormously popular with judges and colleagues. It is no bad thing in a tough competitive profession to be well liked.

There was a lot of overlap between Chandra's life as a barrister and his life as a cricketer. That's not just because for many years he was a keen member of barristers' cricket teams, playing for the Australian Bar against the English and Irish bars and for the New South Wales bar against the Queensland and Victoria bars, neither of which he would have suggested was equivalent to wearing the baggy green or the baggy blue. The real overlap was different. It was to do with talking or speaking.

In the type of semi-social cricket Chandra played for the last 20 or so years before hanging up his boots only about a decade ago, there was a lot of after game chat and quite a few speeches, and for better or worse barristers spend a lot of their time speaking.

Not every client after the case is over would say that his barrister was a good

talker, but no one would have denied that Chandra was a good mouthpiece, and when it came to making speeches he was always a very funny and very gracious speaker. It's a pity that he can't give a eulogy to himself. He wouldn't have big noted himself but he would have made us laugh. Several members of the Queensland Bar cricket team have been in touch since his death to say how funny his speeches were, and one of them, Roger Traves, a former president of the Queensland Bar Association and former Sheffield Shield player, recalled tears of laughter running down his cheeks during one of Chandra's speeches.

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Chandra played most of his serious cricket at school in Sri Lanka, at university and in England, and back in Sri Lanka with his beloved Tamil Union Club in Colombo, whose home ground was the old test match ground. He went there whenever he was in Colombo and

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maintained his membership to the end. In Australia he played a bit of serious cricket but settled into city and suburban one day games first with the Cricketers Club and then with Paddington. He could be classified as an all rounder because he wasn't a bad bat but his forte was his left arm slow bowling, sending down his deliveries and taking a lot of wickets with what some people described as an 'intriguing action'.

For Chandra the cricket community was not confined to the playing field and dressing sheds. He was a great supporter of satellite cricket organisations, particularly charitable ones and he was active in the Primary Club the LBW Trust and the Australian Cricket Society.

Rory has said that he died the way he would have wanted to die having just seen a tense Bledisloe Cup game. That

might be right, but it's doubtful. Harry Solomons sent many of us an email giving a fond and accurate picture of Chandra at the SCG whenever a match was in progress. Kindly man that he was, he'd have wanted to say his goodbyes to family and friends, and if he couldn't surely his real preference if it had to happen would have been for it to happen on a sunny day, as he stood on the lawn behind the member's stand, a cigarette in one hand, a beer in the other, telling his companions that Murali was not really a chucker.

I'll finish with a story about Chandra that I cherish and that I know he liked to recall involving his old club. In 1982 his great friend Roger Gyles, with whom he had a curry the night before he died, put together an Australian Bar Association world cricket tour. At Chandra's insistence Sri Lanka was the

last stop. He organised a game against his old club at the Tamil Union ground. He had the ground dressed with ceremonial flags as for a test match. He arranged for the kitchen and bar to operate at full steam and for the Australian High Commissioner to turn up and watch for a couple of hours.

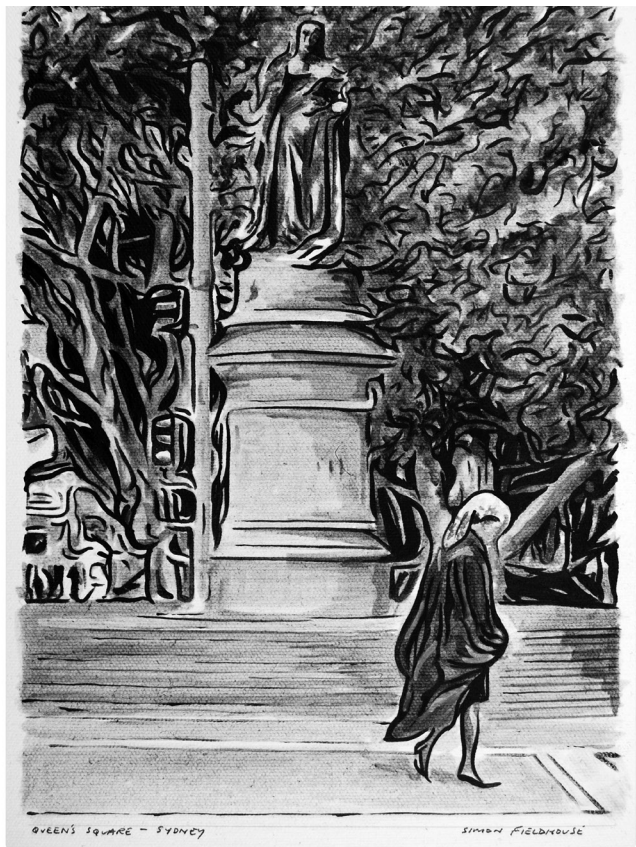
By common consent he was made captain for the game. Before play began he delivered a tongue in cheek rabble rousing speech in the dressing room saying that he would raise the standard of captaincy and if the team responded, victory would be achieved. Then during the after-match formalities he made another speech. It was a very funny and very gracious speech, given as the losing captain.

By Larry King SC



HYDE PARK - SYDNEY

SIMON FIELDHOUSE



QUEEN'S SQUARE - SYDNEY

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