

Tribute to Arnold Napier Boyce

[photograph of A. N. Boyce]

15 March 1918 – 27 December 2006

‘Nihil est melius quam vita diligentissima’

‘Nothing is more important than a committed diligent life’

(from *The surgeon of Crowthorne* by Simon Winchester)

[photograph of wooden clock made by A. N. Boyce]

- Born 15 March 1918, Blantyre, Malawi to missionary parents – Ernest and Jane Boyce, elder brother Charlie and younger sister Cathy
- Early education in Ulster (Northern Ireland), Somerset (England), Swaziland and Ermelo
- Attended the University of the Witwatersrand, gained MA and M Ed
- Transvaal Teachers’ Higher Diploma from the Johannesburg College of Education
- Military service in South African Artillery in Western Desert of North Africa. Wounded in the Battle of Taieb el Essem
- Married Margaret McKenzie 5 December 1953
- Taught matriculation History and Latin for 20 years at Potchefstroom boys’ High and Krugersdorp High. Vice Principal of Krugersdorp High for 10 years
- Daughters Olwen (20 September 1955) and Louise (15 May 1957)
- Head of Department of High School subjects at JCE 1964-1965, Vice Rector 1966 – 1972, Rector from 1973 – 1983
- Professor of Teacher Education at the University of the Witwatersrand
- Author of 17 history textbooks for primary schools and author of book on history teaching
- Chief Examiner of history for the Joint Matriculation Board
- President of the Transvaal Teachers’ Association 1978 – 1979
- Received first TTA Gold Medal for Outstanding Services to Education 1983
- Margaret died 8 August 1994 and he then moved from Westmeath Road, [Parkview] to a townhouse (Magalies) in Montgomery Park
- Grandchildren – Kilda and Kendal, Dale and Ruth
- Moved to Elm Park Retirement Village, [Northcliff] 1998
- Wrote a ‘History of the Johannesburg College of Education’ (1999) and ‘The Years of Transition’ (2002)
- Passed away 27 December 2007

[photograph of Margaret and A. N. Boyce]

THE MAN I ADMIRE MOST, my hero is a man called Napier Boyce, my Grandfather (Papa).

There are many reasons why I cherish this extraordinary man and among them is his desire to build and create unique wooden objects, particularly clocks. My grandfather has also made many tables and chairs. We have 14 different clocks (of which 2 are grandfather clocks) out of the 150 or so clocks he has made to date. The most special thing on each of his wooden clocks is that he carves a little object which represents the things he remembers the special person by. For instance, me and my sister were each presented with one at a party

about 5 years ago and on the little 'ledge' was a duck showing the duck ponds near where we live which we used to be very affectionate and fond of when we were younger and still enjoy going there. Also for my mum, one of his daughters, he carved a picture of a lantern to represent 'the lady and the lamp', Florence Nightingale because my mum is a nurse.

My grandfather's parents were both missionaries and he helped build churches with them and did the clocks upon them and some of the fancy carving. Some of the churches still survive today.

Popa used to fight in the war and got very badly injured when a bomb blew up and he got hit by shrapnel and injured his nose and top jaw resulting in a lot of plastic surgery from which skin from his forehead had to be transferred to other parts of his face.

When he was younger he used to be a top athlete and sprinter.

Popa used to be a teacher and was so until he retired after 45 years. In those 45 years he was respected by colleagues and students and wrote history and teaching books which were all published. In classes teachers told their pupils to get out their Boyces!

My grandfather has also written his and his family's life story which is a massive book and includes black and white pictures which he coloured in magnificently with special paints and with a great deal of time and patience.

Napier now lives on his own and cooks and looks after himself totally independently and has lots of friends to host dinner parties for and attend.

■ Written by Kendal Harrison in 2000 – aged 12

[photograph of Mbabane Church]

Age is a quality of mind
When I have left my dreams behind
When hope is cold
When I no longer look ahead
When my ambitions' fires are dead
Then I am old

But if from life I take the best
And if for life I keep my zest
And love I hold
No matter how the years go by
No matter how the birthdays fly
I am not old

Author Unknown

Given to Napier and Margaret by a friend in 1963

[photograph of a drawing by A. N. Boyce of a pet dog, Rannah, March 2006]

■ Funeral leaflet retyped on 15 July 2016 by Nelao Cokoto. Clarifications added in square brackets by Mark Sandham.