

## LOOKING BACK DR JIM HARLEY

Historically it is hard to establish when SANFL Clubs first had dedicated club doctors. In the early years players probably attended their own doctors or hospitals for treatment, but gradually doctors with practices in SANFL club zones came to provide honorary medical services in an official or semi-official capacity. "Doc" Harley was such a person, and became a bit of a legend around the South footy club in 1960's and 1970's.

Born in Victoria in 1924, James Froomes Harley was educated at St Peters College in Adelaide, served in the RAAF as a navigator during World War II and then studied Medicine at Adelaide University. In the 1950's Jim set up a general medical practice in Adelaide's eastern suburbs, not far from Kensington Oval where South Adelaide played some of its games. Players would drop in to see him for advice (often after hours) and he realised that they had special needs that weren't always being met by their local GPs, so he offered his services to the Club. He could assess and treat players at training and matches and facilitate referral to specialists when needed.

Jim became a passionate South supporter, enduring the hard years when it was a perennial bottom team but revelling in the famous 1964 bottom-to-top premiership under Neil Kerley. Jim is included in the official premiership team photograph.

Jim was known for his forthright opinions and no-nonsense approach in those times before political correctness took over. He was highly regarded by his patients and all at the Panthers. In addition to his busy medical practice he would officiate at South training and games with no payment apart from a match ticket on Saturdays. Kerley dubbed him "Dr Jeckyl and Mr Hyde" because a mild mannered approach to his family and patients turned into vociferous emotion on match days. He would single out the field umpire for particular attention, and anyone connected with hated rival Port Adelaide.

During this period, professionalism in training and medical care was starting to come into sport. Of course there were no CT scans, MRI's or arthroscopies in those days! Jim was always available to treat injuries and help with other medical and personal issues.

Players like Peter Dorley, Alan White, Bob Schmidt and Mick Rivers had particular reasons to be grateful for Doc Harley's medical expertise, but all the players and officials of that era remember him with gratitude and affection.



He was instrumental in the establishment of Burnside War Memorial Hospital in 1956 and was Chairman of its Board for many years. A framed "Advertiser" cartoon depicting the 1964 South premiership triumph hung in the staff room for many years. Jim had a friendly rivalry with the head theatre nurse who was a Port supporter!

Jim was active in professional associations including being State President of the Australian Medical Association in 1976.

He continued as a Club doctor until 1979 when he became ill with secondary cancer, resulting tragically in his death in 1982 at only fifty eight years of age. Jim's wife and practice partner Dr Rosemary Harley had died a few years earlier.

Jim leaves three sons and a daughter, and is the grandfather of Geelong premiership captain and commentator Tom Harley. Unfortunately neither Jim nor Rosemary lived long enough to see him play.

Tony Shaw, master of ceremonies at the recent fiftyyear Premiership reunion paid tribute to Doc Harley and welcomed his sons Hugh and Rick to the function. There were many comments and memories of the part Jim played in the South's welfare and success and he was described as the "heart and soul" of the Club in his time.

Dr Randal Williams

 **Aussie**  
**Christies Beach**