

Alistair Weakley: a tribute

I WAS privileged to be able to call Ally Weakley my friend. To me and so many others he was everything that a friend ought to be - kind, helpful, caring, critical when necessary, supportive, and above all, fiercely loyal. He was a man of unshakeable integrity who served as an example to all who knew him. His popularity is not due to his achievements, which were impressive and considerable. Rather, it is the result of his vibrant personality, which seemed to reach out to all those he came into contact with.

Ally was a man with a powerful sense of fairness in all aspects of life. Everyone was given a chance to measure up to his exacting standards. If you failed, or he disagreed with you, he had no hesitation in letting you know. This was never done with any rancour, as his legion of friends will testify. He held strong opinions, but accepted other people's arguments and was prepared to alter his opinions if your argument was sound enough to convince him.

A staunch advocate of liberal thought, Ally considered all persons as deserving of respect until they proved otherwise. He argued cogently for equality of opportunity for all, presenting

perceptive insights into the ills that afflicted his country. The senseless manner of his death is made all the more tragic by his humanity, his compassion, and his vision of how our society ought to function.

As a rugby player he was feared and respected by opponents, and revered by spectators and those with whom he played. He invoked the wrath of the South African Rugby Board when he insisted on playing non-racial rugby at a time when that was considered close to heresy.

He was devoted to his loved ones and committed to securing them a bright future. If they or any of his friends were in any difficulty, he would assist with a minimum of fuss and no thought of reciprocation. If we could all be as selfless as he, the world would indeed be a better place.

Again, along with so many others I was privileged to be able to call Ally Weakley my friend. I respected him and I loved him. I shall miss him, but he will continue to inspire me.
A friend

Steve Olivier

★ The funeral service will be held at Commemoration Methodist Church tomorrow at 11am.

Donations in lieu of flowers may be sent to the SPCA of Grahamstown Hospice.