

Gough Whitlam (in 2005) "was not big on small talk," friend Eric Walsh tells WHO. "With almost anything he said he would make an intelligent judgment, and you always felt he was right."



1916-2014

GOUGH WHITLAM

Whitlam with singer Little Pattie during the "It's Time" federal election campaign in 1972.



GOUGH'S LAST DAYS
Up until the middle of this year, Whitlam, 98, was still making the trek into his Sydney CBD office. "He used to go to the office three days a week," says friend Eric Walsh. "He would answer letters. I think going to the office was as much about getting out of the nursing home."

Whitlam on the steps of Parliament House, Canberra, shortly after he was dismissed from government on Nov. 11, 1975.



Kep Enderby will never forget the Tuesday of Nov. 11, 1975. Back then, Enderby was the nation's Attorney-General in Gough Whitlam's government when he got a call from Whitlam on the day the Prime Minister was sensationally sacked by Governor-General Sir John Kerr. "Gough wanted me urgently over at the Lodge, so I got a car over there," Enderby, now living in a Sydney retirement home, tells WHO. "Gough met me at the door and said, 'The bastard's done a game on us.'"

So marked the end of one of the most controversial prime-ministerial stints and the beginning of a legacy that will endure long after Whitlam's death on Oct. 21. "Gough Whitlam was a giant of his time," said Prime Minister Tony Abbott of the father of four, who died in Sydney aged 98. Wrote former Prime Minister Julia Gillard in *The Guardian*: "He transformed Australia and we are in his debt."

In a statement released on the morning of their father's death, sons Antony, Nicholas and Stephen Whitlam and daughter Catherine Dovey paid tribute to "a loving and generous father ... a source of inspiration to us and our families and for millions of Australians." His family will hold a private cremation and there

will be a public memorial service for Whitlam, who spent his last years in Lulworth House, a Sydney aged-care facility (Margaret, his wife of almost 70 years, died in 2012). "He didn't like being there," friend Eric Walsh tells WHO, "but he realised he had to be there."

Indeed, his health deteriorated this year, ending his regular visits to his office in the Sydney CBD. "Last month I saw a family member and she said, 'He's not good at all,'" says Enderby, 88. "And the last time I saw him, I wasn't certain he knew who I was."

Born in Melbourne in 1916, Edward Gough Whitlam studied arts and law before enlisting in the Army Reserve after the outbreak of World War II. Whitlam, who served in the Royal Australian Air Force, was admitted as a barrister after the war, but politics became his passion. Having joined the Labor Party in 1945, he ran in council and NSW elections before winning the federal seat of Werriwa in 1952. "He will lead the party one day," predicted then Prime Minister Robert Menzies. "It will not be dull."

Menzies was right. Whitlam took over the Labor leadership in 1967, and in 1972—after 23 years of Liberal rule in Australia—ran the groundbreaking "It's Time" campaign and won Labor government on Dec. 2. He went to work

immediately, putting an end to military conscription at the time of the Vietnam War and recognising Aboriginal land rights. He abolished the White Australia policy, scrapped university fees and poured funding into education institutions. "He is still getting letters from people who got free university education thanks to Whitlam," says Walsh, who is a government lobbyist. He also established Australia's universal health-care system, Medicare. Whitlam "changed the way Australia thought about itself and gave the country a new destiny," said former Prime Minister Paul Keating.

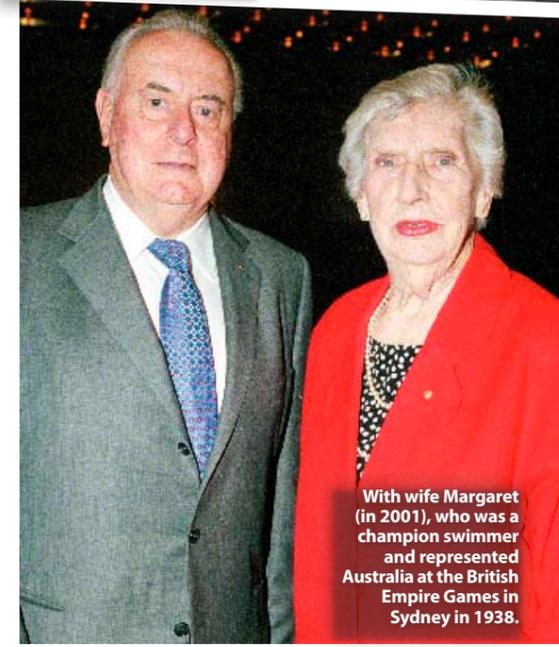
Yet while he forged those reforms, the economy faltered. Whitlam sought a \$4 billion loan to fund his programs and the Opposition, led by Malcolm Fraser, blocked the government's plans in the Senate, in the hope Whitlam would call an election. Whitlam refused and was sacked on Nov. 11, 1975, by Kerr, who installed Fraser as the temporary Prime Minister. "Well may we say, 'God save the Queen,'" Whitlam famously said that day, "because nothing will save the Governor-General."

Politically, Gough wasn't saved either, losing the next federal election to Fraser, with whom he later forged a friendship. His legacy, however, survives. Whitlam "was a gentleman who believed in what he believed, but it didn't interfere with the personal relationships," says former Liberal MP Philip Ruddock. Said Keating: "He will be missed by all who identified with his values and determination to see Australia a better place. But no-one will miss him more than his family."

■ By Michael Crooks. Reported by Emma Martin



The Whitlam family during a 1973 visit to London.



With wife Margaret (in 2001), who was a champion swimmer and represented Australia at the British Empire Games in Sydney in 1938.

He was sensationally dismissed and polarised the public, but the former Prime Minister's legacy endures

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: PETER BREW/BEVANS/SHUTTERMEDIA; NEWSPIX (2); GETTY IMAGES (2)