

# AGRA HALL OF FAME

## Frank Kennedy (Inducted 2009)

Years involved in industry: 20

### Category: Associate

Iconic New South Wales media figure during the halcyon days of Greyhound Racing in the 60's and 70's.

Frank was a leading figure in the broadcasting of New South Wales greyhound racing for many years. The former champion boxer became a trainer and promoter before pioneering greyhound broadcasts on 2KA Katoomba in 1964.

His replacement at 2KA was none other than AGRA Hall of Famer Paul Ambrosoli.

Frank's interest in greyhounds went back to his younger days when his father, Charlie trained greyhounds. Frank had fond memories of a dog his father raced called Happy Tanunda, a top class chaser in the 30's.



Happy Tanunda consistently raced in top grade and won his last race at Harold Park as a six-year-old.

In one-year, Happy Tanunda won 536 pounds in prizemoney and was the leading stake winner. Happy Tanunda's financial contribution to the Kennedy family was a blessing, as in those days a five-pound note was talked about but seldom seen by most people.

Frank's uncles, Bill and Ernie were both greyhound trainers putting a lead on many winners over the years. Bill Scully road on horseback as a judge at the live hare coursing in the late 20's and was an active trainer into the 70's.

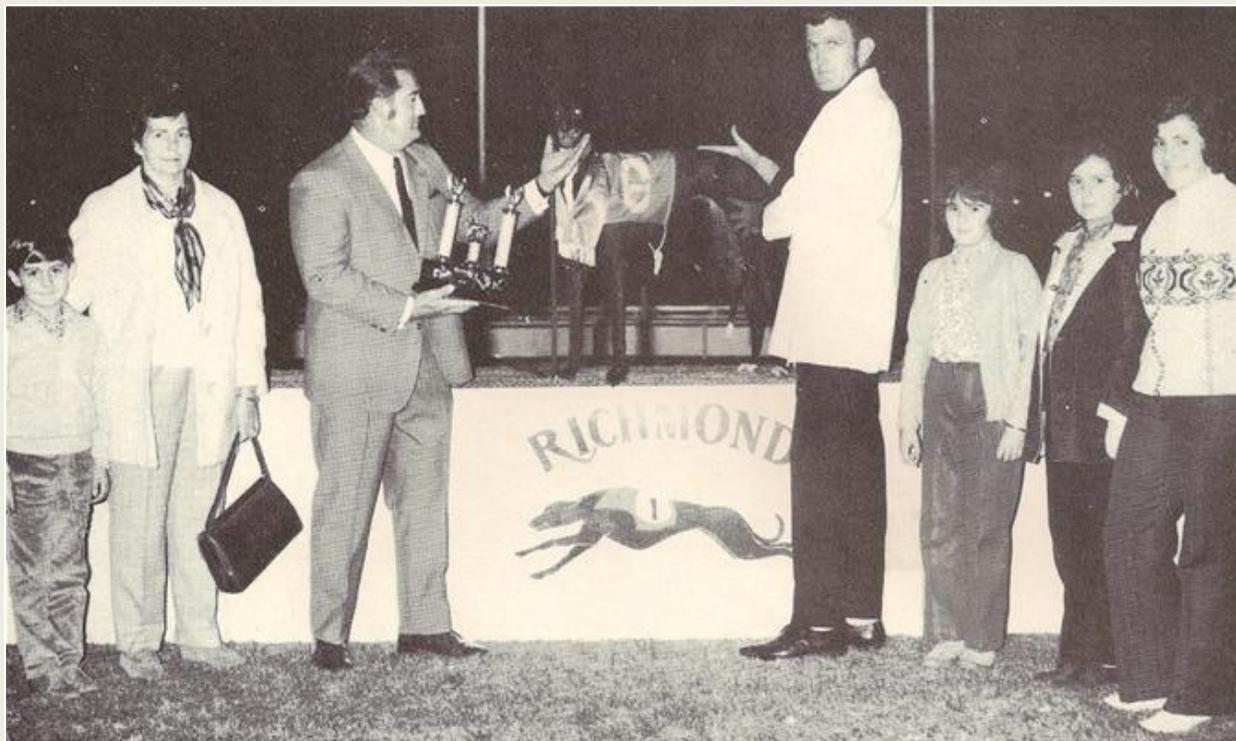
Frank Kennedy reached the top of his profession in the early 70's at that stage of his career he was an in demand figure at race clubs, on Radio and Television.

But his future had not always been so promising after many years of Boxing, boxing promotions and real estate. Frank came back to his first love, greyhound racing.

In doing so he achieved fame but only after arduous work and complete confidence in his own ability to succeed.

Frank's career as a race broadcaster begun with calls of country gallops, trotting calls from Katoomba and as the official caller at the opening of the new greyhound track at Orange. His big break came in the early 60's when he took over broadcasting the greyhounds on the old

straight track at Richmond when Ian Craig went over to radio station 2UE. The Richmond club asked Frank to fill in until a course announcer could be found.



**Frank and his family Anne, Terry (7), Bernice (9), Michelle (11) and Paulette (16)**

So pleased with Frank's work the club offered him the job as the permanent broadcaster. Frank went from strength to strength and always held a soft spot for the Richmond Club, whose support gave him the opportunity to become one of Australia's top greyhound broadcasters.

Frank Kennedy went on to cover the action from Wollongong, Bulli, Gosford, Dapto and later moved to Sydney's 2UE and called at Wentby and Harold Park. It was at 2UE that he gave Graham McNeice his big break in 1966.

Frank was an outstanding Television performer he was a much loved panel member and remembered for his lively appearances on the "Punters Post Modern" which was part of Channel 7's Sunday Sports show Sports Action. He shared the spotlight with Ian Craig and Ray Conroy.



Known as 'the little punter's friend', Frank was instrumental in the changing of legislation relating to the TAB minimum dividend, after campaigning against the 'money back' return.

Frank also wrote for a number of years in the 70's a very thought provoking column in the National Greyhound News named "Kennedy Calling"

He shared a great friendship with the famous Fletcher family and he loved calling the Moss dogs.

He also established a great love and friendship with a young spastic boy named Gary Wilson. Frank first met

Gary at Richmond in 1968 and was immediately touched with the unfortunate circumstances and courage of the young man. Born in 1951 Wilson had tragically at three months old

swallowed a dummy that lodged in his throat, it cut off the oxygen to his brain for three minutes leaving the baby handicapped for the rest of his life. Wilson had grown to love greyhound racing after listening to and watching Frank's during his teens. Because of failing eyesight he could only listen to Frank's calls and the pair became very close with Gary becoming a constant companion at most meetings.

Frank organised the purchase of three brilliant chasers of the 70's Woolley Wilson, Paceamatic and Busy Bomber, between them they won many races to the delight of Wilson, his family and Frank. Gary himself became quite a media figure in both New South Wales and where he has lived for many years Western Australia to this day he is heard on Radio still tipping and following greyhound racing.

Frank said on many occasions what an inspiration his wife Anne had been to him over the years, he would have found great delight that his youngest son Terry had followed him into the media many years after his sad passing.

Such was the respect held for Frank Kennedy leading media presenter Graham McNeice joined Frank's wife Anne, members of the family and Gary Wilson in Perth for Frank's induction into the AGRA Hall of Fame.

Frank Kennedy died much too young at 51 in 1977.



**Graham McNeice with Anne Kennedy, Frank's Daughter Paulette Gerard, Gary Wilson and his wife Norm in Perth at Frank's induction.**