



Incorporated No. A0021659A

Life Membership

Mike Quist

- awarded 14 August, 2010 -



Very so often we have the privilege of bestowing on someone the Club's highest honour ... life membership.

Our constitution says that, to achieve this honour, you have to have done something that has, or will, benefit the Club for at least three years. It also has to have the unanimous support of the Committee.

We have awarded 11 life memberships so far in our history for different reasons ... some for outstanding service on the committee, some in recognition of their feats on the track and their role in developing the motor sport side of our Club. In a couple of cases I think we awarded it to make the people go away ... at least that's been the effect!

Tonight, however, is a little different. It's about correcting an important piece of our Club's history, and it's an award that should have been made years ago.

Normally we try to keep the recipient's name a surprise until the end, giving a run-down of their feats or involvement before announcing their name.

But this time the person's role in the Club's history is such that there's no point trying to do that ... it couldn't be anyone else!

As National Public Relations Manager for Mazda Australia when the Mazda MX-5 reached our shores in 1989, Mike Quist played an integral role in the car's launch and in the development of the Australian MX-5 clubs.

Mike was at Mazda's proving ground in Japan reviewing a Mazda that was about to be released in Australia, when Toshihiko Harai, later known as the father of the MX-5, stopped the bus and took him to a nondescript shed in an out-of-the-way corner.

From this hiding place Mr Harai rolled out the prototype of a secret new front-engined, rear-wheel drive lightweight sports car ... the Mazda MX-5.

After putting his eyes and his tongue back in his head, the first thing Mike promised Mr Harai was that he would deliver him an MX-5 car club in every Australian state.

And deliver he did. Mike built the development of the Australian Mazda MX-5 clubs into his public relations plan as an integral part of the launch and ongoing support of this exciting new vehicle and, with his deputy Sue Ransom, gave great support to their establishment in each mainland capital city.

In Victoria's case it was Mike who oversaw the birth of the inaugural club, with founders and fellow life members Michael and Margaret Gemm. Then, after a parting of ways between that club and Mazda, he again provided key resources to establish a second, Mazda-affiliated club.

Mike remained in the background but was always an active supporter of the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria, through the early lean times and through the merger of the two Victorian Clubs in 1995, right up until his retirement from Mazda in 2001.

His belief in the formation of our clubs, despite strong urgings from others within Mazda that he was creating a rod for his own back, set the foundation for the support that our clubs have enjoyed from Mazda to this day. The relationship between Mazda and the MX-5 clubs is probably unique in Australia, and it stems from the seeds that Mike planted more than 20 years ago.

There is no doubt that there would have been MX-5 clubs in Australia without Mike's involvement, but they would certainly have been very different from what we see today.

Mike's influence and support for this Club from its earliest days has extended across the 20 years of its existence. It is not forgotten and is certainly worthy of recognition, however belated.

In the opinion of the President and Committee of the Mazda MX-5 Club of Victoria, Mike more than meets the requirements for life membership, and I am very pleased to present him with this award today.