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## VALE – Max Cherry, OAM

Max Cherry was a guru coach - in every sense of what that word has come to mean. He was widely respected, particularly by thinkers within the Australian athletics community. They saw a man who had coached for a huge period of time, who in his senior years retained extraordinary enthusiasm for coaching youngsters and senior athletes, alike.

Max was never afraid to provide his thoughts on what was best for athletics either in Tasmania and nationally. No-one, for a moment, disputed his right to do so - he had earned it many times over by the contribution he had made over 60 years as an athlete, administrator and most importantly and significantly, as a coach.

To watch Max in action on the track, would have been of benefit to any aspiring coach. He was equally enthusiastic with, although perhaps slightly less demanding of, a 13 year old starting out athletics, as he was with one of his international representative athletes.

Coaching Donna MacFarlane to a Commonwealth Games, 32 years after achieving the same (in 1974) with Randal Markey, and then to an Olympic Games, 32 years after doing just that (in 1976) for Dave Chettle - says much about Max - about perseverance, dedication and patience, in addition to coaching knowledge and skill. For Max, there was no standard textbook - only the next challenge.

Max was the recipient of the Australian Sports Medal in 2000, and then in June 2007, the Medal of the Order of Australia. He was the Tasmanian Sports Star Awards' Coach of the Year, a multiple winner of the AT equivalent and was bestowed with the sport's most prestigious coaching honour, the Henri Schubert Award.

He was a Life Member both AT and his club, Sandy Bay Harriers and in his 54th year in coaching, he was continuing to provide support to others as the President of the Tasmanian Branch of the Australian Track and Field Coaches Association.

Here we mention only Max's contribution to athletics, but his devotion extended well beyond our sport to football umpiring, where he was also a life member, and to many other sporting and community activities.

It is too often said that no individual is impossible to replace. In the case of Max, this is simply untrue.

Brian Roe  
President - Athletics Tasmania