

# My Daddy My Hero

## By Chanele Fawcus (daughter)



Ted Keenan & his daughter Chanele, 1975.

Everyone thinks their daddy is their hero but my daddy really was. What he achieved during his life was amazing and something that I and my family are very proud of. Something I am extremely proud of is how I got my name. Daddy called me “Chanele” after his English Channel swim in 1972.

Daddy was a man who did so much for charity. He was one of the most generous men I have ever met and would help anyone who needed it. He always told me to thank people as he used to say it’s not hard to say thanks. Daddy was the one person in my life that had 100% faith in me and would be there for me any time, day or night. He was full of character and was great craic. He enjoyed spending time with me and my friends as I was growing up and always dropped us off at the pub at night, he never picked us up as he’d be in bed. He was a very early riser and he’d think nothing of ringing me at 06.00 for the chat.

Exercise was one of his joys in life and I remember going to the barracks with him and doing the circuits as a young child. I remember Big Basil, Jock Cooper, Jack McFarland and Jimmy Dunbar training with daddy and they always had a bit of a competition at the end doing press-ups which Brian my brother normally won. I also remember him teaching me to swim and he was so proud when I and a group of friends completed several charity swims with him. Daddy was a larger than life character with a great sense of humour. Although very modest about his achievements, he just loved telling stories about his channel swims and he often spoke at local schools about his experiences. When I was 11 my teacher Martha Smyth helped me complete a project on my daddy. We called it a Living Legend and I remember feeling so proud completing this project.

Daddy never forgot the things people did for him and I recall him telling me many stories about his earlier days. He’d talk about how he’d cycle to Irvinestown three times a week to see my mummy when they were courting. He’d also remind me that “the roads in them days weren’t like they are now”.

One of the best memories I have of him was going to The Swimming Hall of Fame in Fort Lauderdale in 1990. We were met by the President of the Hall of Fame and they made a big thing out of daddy being there and gave his achievements the recognition they deserved. Daddy couldn’t believe his name was there beside other famous swimmers and we met a two time Olympic medal winner Mary Wayte. We brought our swimming things and swam in the 50 metre pool there though daddy did tell them he preferred to swim in the sea as the pool was too warm. To be honest I thought it was cold enough. In Florida, Daddy met American open-water swimmers who loved hearing his experiences and many remained great friends with Daddy for the rest of his life.

Daddy loved the sea and even in the winter months he'd drive us to Bundoran on a Sunday just so he could see the sea. He loved swimming in Bundoran and his later years he went to Creevy Pier. He swam with Gerry Burns, P.J. O'Reilly and Donal Hannigan on many occasions. He continued to swim in the sea until very late in life despite the fact that he had 2 artificial hips – probably as a result of everything he put his body through completing his swims.

To give you an idea what a character my daddy was. After his Cardiac Bypass operation in 1992 he attempted to swim the English Channel. He wanted to show people that there was life after a bypass. He unfortunately didn't complete but it was due to the weather not the fact he'd had a bypass. This in itself speaks volumes on the type of man he was.

Daddy always told me I'd make a good Matron. He used to say this to me from when I first qualified as a Nurse and I was proud to have gained my first Matron's post just before he died.

Another love of daddy's life was his grandchildren. After Carla (his first grandchild) was born over thirty years ago he insisted they called him Ted as he thought he was too young to be called grandad. He had a special relationship with my son Jack and I remember Jack asking me when he about three years old why everyone in Enniskillen knew him. This was because daddy had told anyone that would listen all about Jack. Not a day goes by that my three kids don't mention Ted. It just goes to show what an impact he had in their lives.

I'm honoured to say daddy made me the person I am today and I wouldn't be where I am today without him. He certainly was a legend and will always be my hero.



Having Fun! Chanele & Ted, 1975.

