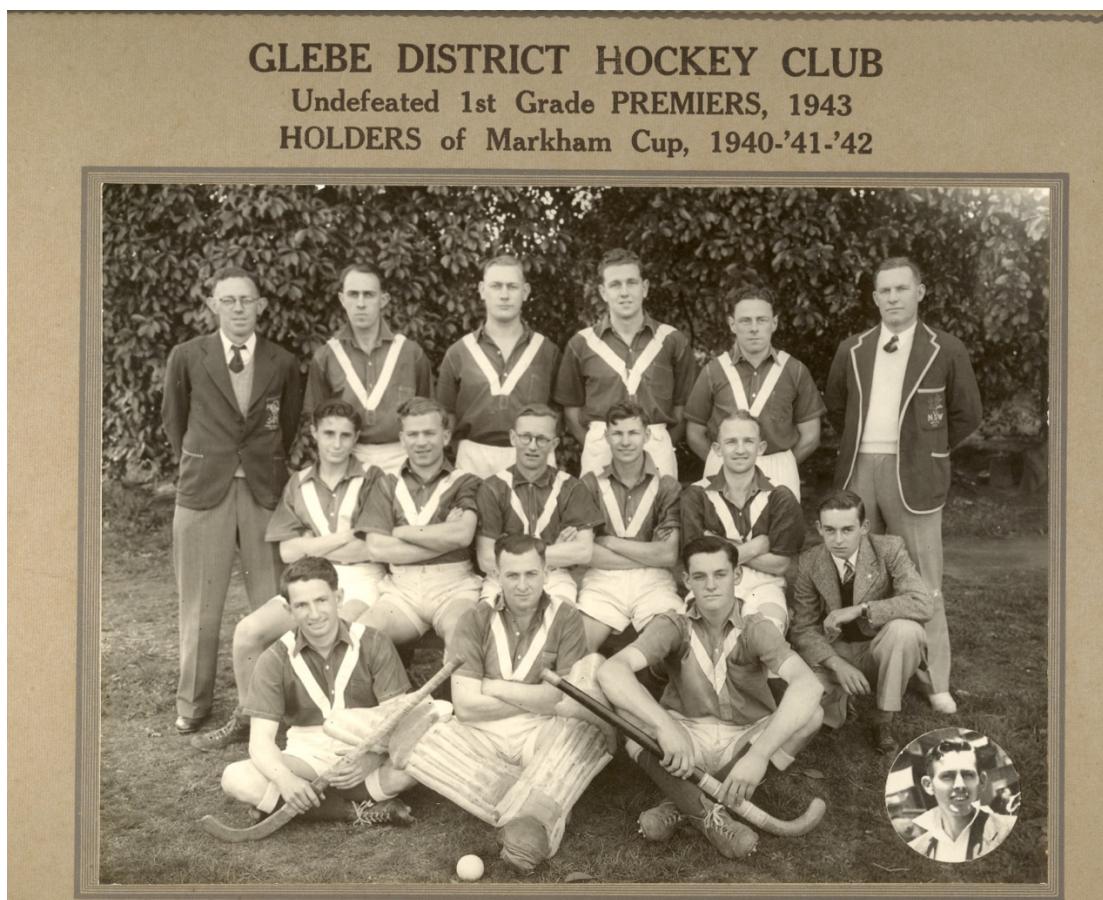


BIOGRAPHY OF VERNON JOSEPH TURNER (1924-)

Vernon was born in 1924 at Coraki, near Lismore on the north coast of New South Wales in 1924, the youngest of the nine children of Edward and Catherine Turner (nee Casey). The names of his siblings listed in descending order were Eric, Algernon, Louis, Milton, Molly, Jean, Phyllis(Betty), Carlyle and Vernon. His primary school education was at Saint Joseph's School, Coraki. The depression ruined his father's dairy business, and as a consequence the family home and its contents had to be sold. The Turner family moved to Glebe when Vernon was twelve and a half years old. He lived at 60 Saint John's Road, Glebe with his cousins, the McGraths. Vernon spent two years of his secondary schooling at Glebe Public School in Glebe Point Road, Glebe.

Growing-up, Vernon was a keen sportsman, having played cricket for the Glebe Cricket Club and park soccer. His nephew Frank, who was actually a year older than Vernon, played hockey for Glebe so he and Vernon took to cutting branches off trees from which to fashion hockey sticks, to play mock hockey. Vernon found that he appeared to have some skill at this game so he began playing hockey for Glebe in 1942, aged 17 years, in the H Team. During the War years the Metropolitan Hockey Association ran an ungraded competition. Players in the H team of 1942 were Sid Cainduff, Charlie Humphreys, Jack Cummings, Les Waight, Mervyn Nixon, Tom Irvine, Jack Tanner, Kelvin Dickey, Kevin Ryan, Charlie Whiteside, Vic Burton, and Jack Worley. Vernon had played 117 Club games over seven seasons as at the conclusion of the 1948 season.



Back Row L-R Jack William Taylor, Tom Taylor, Clive Bush, Kelvin Dickey, Billy Ryan, Charlie Humphreys (President)
Middle Row L-R: Vic Burton, Jack Cummins, Jack Quinlan (Captain), Jack C Taylor, Jim Kenny, Paul Rogers
Front Row L-R: Billy Atkinson, Sid Cainduff, Vernon Turner, Insert: Tom Irvine

Vernon was a member of the 1952 Premiership First Grade winning team along with Frank Murray (captain), Noel Walker, Harry A. Wark, Ray Thorpe, Bob Needham, Les Waight, Bill Ryan, Vince Halls, Ken Wark, Jack Taylor, Bill Lord, Glen Elliott and Fred Needham.

The 1952 Annual Report had this to say about Vernon “scholar and gentleman, renowned after-dinner speaker, especially with single female audience. Obvious State captain.”

At the end of the 1954 season Vernon had played over 200 games for Glebe and this tally had increased to 259 by the close of the 1957 season. Of these, 250 were played in First Grade. Vernon was a talented hockey player, who played mostly on the left wing, but he spent a season or two late in his career as a left half. He had vision, insight, read a game well, his option taking was usually spot-on; he had a good turn of pace and a hard, accurate shot at goal. He rarely overplayed his own hand, and always tried to do the best by his team.

Hero, one-out, selfish, flashy, inane runs were not Vernon’s style. He was well liked and well respected by his team-mates. The Glebe teams in which he played were a tight-knit, resilient group in which the team performance was much better than the sum of the talents and skills of the individuals in it. Vernon played in Glebe First Grade teams that were very hard to beat.



Vernon Turner (going for the ball) playing for Glebe against Mosman at Jubilee Oval, Glebe in the mid-50s. Glebe player directly behind Vernon is Jack C Taylor; the Glebe player to Vernon’s left is Bennett Dunn.

These teams were strong all over the field and had the talent possessed by most great sporting teams of being able to rise to the occasion, lift the tempo, and produce a goal from ‘nowhere’. Harry J. Wark remembers:

"The Glebe teams of the '40s and '50s went away to play in country carnivals at Goulburn and Bathurst, playing at the Bathurst Showground and at the Kenmore psychiatric facility in Goulburn. The final of the carnival on a cold winter Sunday afternoon would be watched by over a thousand people, standing at least two deep all around the field behind ropes, with over 99% of the people in the crowd cheering for Glebe's opposition.

It was uncanny how often the Glebe team would come from behind, produce a tremendous finishing burst and win the game with only seconds remaining, much to the disappointment of the home crowd. The Glebe teams lost a couple of country carnival finals, but won the vast majority of them.

The team had tremendous self-belief and great resilience, the players were well disciplined, the team had a never-say-die attitude, and the game was never over until the final whistle blew. Players accepted victory with good grace and humility, and defeat with equanimity. Negative talk and comments were rare at the post game team talk.

It was my great privilege and pleasure to have been able to watch these great Glebe teams in which Vernon was an integral part, a vital cog."

Vernon played in the Glebe First Grade team from 1942 to 1957, a sixteen year period, and in that time he played in twelve Sydney Hockey Association Premiership winning teams. The Glebe team won the First Grade Premiership for seven consecutive years from 1947 to 1953 years, which remains a record for the longest period of consecutive First Grade premiership wins in Sydney Hockey Association history.

On the administrative side Vernon held the following elected administrative positions for Glebe:

Assistant Treasurer 1942-1943

Management Committee 1944

Club Vice-Captain 1950-1954

Vernon represented Sydney in the Sydney Senior Representative Men's Team continuously for the fourteen year period 1944-1957. He played in the NSW Senior Representative Team for the nine year period 1947-1955 and captained the team for six of these nine years.

Representative team selections are usually associated with some conjecture, and the question of vested interests is occasionally raised in association with selection controversies. Vernon was most unlucky not to have played for Australia. In the mid-1950s his Glebe team-mates considered Vernon to be far and away the best left-winger in the Country.

There was a strongly held view in the Glebe Club that Vernon was robbed of Australian selection because of politics. An Australian selector of that time had played for Glebe from 1931-1948, some World War Two years excluded, and had in fact played in Glebe teams with Vernon, but had transferred to another Club after the war, because of the residential rules that were then in place.

With the Melbourne Olympic Games coming up, the ex-Glebe-player-cum-Australian-Selector picked a left-winger from his new club over Vernon, on the pretext of giving youth a go. Vernon was 31 years old at the time, playing outstanding hockey, and at the peak of his hockey abilities. The player selected in the Australian team was well known to the Glebe players, as he played in the Sydney Competition. The almost universal view among

the Glebe players was that he was nowhere near as good as Vernon. Animosity between the ex-Glebe-player-cum-Australian-Selector, the Glebe Club and Vernon himself continued for many decades.



Vernon Turner playing for NSW in a game against Western Australia at the 1953 Australian Hockey Championships.

Continuing on with the theme of having to be residentially qualified to play for a District Club, Vernon was a saviour as far as the Glebe District Hockey Club was concerned. For many years in the 1950's twelve to fifteen Glebe players were registered as living at Vernon's two bedroom flat in Leichhardt Street Glebe. When Vernon moved to Blaxland the players address 'moved' to the flats above and behind Harry Wark's butcher shop in Mansfield Street Rozelle.

The Club fielded its first junior team, an Under 16 team in 1948 with Vince Halls, Senior as its manager. Then Vernon took over. Not only was Vernon a champion hockey player, he was a phenomenally dedicated and committed coach. In 1949-1958 the Club's junior teams were supervised, inspired, organised, enthused and trained by Vernon Turner. For ten years Vernon was the driving force within the Club's junior movement. He was an optimist, an enthusiast, a great motivator, and a good organiser, ideally suited to his role working with younger players.



The Glebe Police Boys Club Senior Team of 1955, taken at the Club in Federal Road, Glebe. Back Row L-R Barry Goodrick, Tony Irwin, John Eden, Robert Chandler, Bruce McPherson. Front Row L-R: Barry Sullivan, J McGarry, Robert Brown, Coach Vernon Turner, R Bourke, Graeme Gilmour, Allan McKeown. Sitting: Goalie John Wright
In the 1950s the junior competition was played at Saint Paul's Oval, at the University of Sydney. Glebe played in the Eastern Division Competition which comprised Eastern Suburbs, Randwick, YMCA, and Glebe.

In 1950 the Management Committee of the Club dedicated a perpetual trophy in Vernon's honour called the V J Turner Cup, which is presented annually to the player under 16 years who is adjudged the most improved and best behaved player for the season. Keith Riley won the inaugural V J Turner Cup in 1950.

By 1955 Vernon had built up the junior base to the extent that the Club fielded seven junior teams, a record for the Club at that time.

Vernon had the following to say in his end of season 1955 Junior Report: "There is a quality in hockey that is far more desirable than winning and that is the learning and acquisition of sportsmanship; the basic philosophy of our Club." Pursuing this point a little further, he went on, "It is true to say that the essence of our whole teaching has been to conduct yourself like a sportsman on and off the field."

Vernon was a stickler for teamwork, as exemplified by his comments in the 1956 Annual Report in describing the season had by a Glebe Under 16 team: "Obviously, a team can win only by superior ability either in individuals or in the team as a whole. Our teams as individuals were equal to any in the competition but the same could not be

said of their teamwork. It is one thing to be a member of a team, but another to play as a team." And further "To the other players joining the senior ranks, remember at all times that the greatest asset you can take with you is your desire to play in the team selected as a member of the team, not as an individual. By doing this you will not only be helping the Club but you will join in the thrill of being a member of a winning combination."

Reading the Club's Annual Reports it was clear that Vernon did almost all of the organizing for the Club's six or seven junior teams in the mid-50s, and got little support from anyone else in the Club. Vernon wrote in the 1957 Annual Report: "With regards to the members of the teams comprising the Under Sixteen teams, a word of appreciation is earned by their undefeated spirit throughout the season in the face of a lack of support and encouragement from the senior members of the Club. This is a difficult problem at any time but one which appears to be able to be solved by every other Club except Glebe."

It was during this 1949-1958 period that Vernon became known as the "Father of Junior Hockey at Glebe". He went to many schools in Glebe and surrounding districts, spoke to school teachers and school students and invited the children to attend St. Paul's Oval at The University of Sydney on a Saturday morning during the hockey season, where they would be given instruction in how to play hockey. Vernon had enthusiasm, energy and passion for the task. His commitment, his energy, community mindedness, and selfless dedication to the welfare of others is inspiring to recognise today.

Over the years more than 130 boys came along and were placed in teams. In the 1950's the Club fielded seven or eight junior teams each season. Every Saturday the teams would participate in a well-organized and reliable competition at St. Paul's fields. Vernon made practising and playing hockey good fun for his pupils. He was able to impart his enthusiasm for the sport, and for friendly, civil, polite human interactions between participants of the sport, onto his charges. Harry J. Wark who was coached by Vernon in 1957 and 1958 opines: "He was a legend with the boys he coached."

Vernon only coached boys. It was not until 1976 that Glebe had a girl play in its junior ranks, when Lisa Williams, the daughter of an ex-Glebe grade player Barry Williams and his wife Kathy commenced playing. Vernon coached Barry in the Under Sixteen team of 1955. Lisa played in the Glebe Women's Third Grade team of 2018.

Eventually as these children matured and became young men, a large number of them played for the State and one, Pat Nilan, went on to play for Australia at three Olympic Games in 1960, 1964 and 1968. Vernon reminisced that Pat deserved his success because "he would practise anything and everything I asked him to do".

During this time many families were too poor to buy hockey sticks and playing shirts so Vernon purchased different coloured material and his sister made shirts for the children gratis. At the start of each season Vernon's sister often enlisted the help of other family members to help with the shirt making, and this help was always freely and willingly given. Vernon came from a generous family.

As well, Vernon collected broken hockey sticks from his senior hockey playing team-mates and had them renewed, restored and made as good as new, on the cheap, by two friendly cabinet makers, the Atkinson Brothers, who had a joinery business at 62 Glebe Point Road. It was in this way that every child had a stick and a team shirt. The children and their families were charged nothing to play.

Vernon contributed thousands of pounds (decimal currency came in, in February 1966) of his own money to buy materials for shirt making, hockey sticks, hockey stick repair materials, goal keeping equipment and other miscellaneous pieces of equipment. He was a generous man, and contributed greatly to the common good. This

was all done in an unobtrusive, low key way, without any pomp, ostentation or ceremony. He did it because he thought it was the right thing to do, and it helped many children and young people along their life's journey.

In his last year playing for the Glebe First Grade team in 1957 Vernon played in a team with five players he had coached in the Glebe Under Sixteen teams, Bennett Dunn, Victor Westacott, Bill Stubbs, Greg Harris and Bob "Rocker" Fox.

Vernon left Glebe after the 1958 season having played 259 games for the Club. He did not take the field as a player in 1958, but was still very active in the Club during that year as the junior organiser, administrator and head/only coach. In 1958 the Club Management had not provided Vernon with the help and support he felt he needed to be able to coach and encourage the Club's junior teams in the manner in which he would have liked to have done so.

Ten years of unstinting devotion to the Club's juniors from 1949-1958 with little practical help, or encouragement from other senior players had taken a toll on Vernon. In 1959 Vernon started as a school teacher at Croydon Park Central School, and moved to Blaxland, at the foot of the Blue Mountains. Blaxland is 60 kilometres from Glebe and its home ground at Jubilee Oval and an hour's car journey at non-peak times. With regret, Vernon decided that after being a player and junior coach for sixteen years at Glebe it was time for him to move on to new challenges and to bid farewell to his many friends, young and old, at the Club.

After Vernon left, the Club's junior teams fell into disarray. The Club did not have the requisite number of junior teams to comply with the requirements of the Sydney Hockey Association By-Laws and for a time it looked as if the Club might become extinct. In 1963 the Club considered amalgamation with the Western Suburbs Hockey Club, but as it turned out, this did not eventuate.

Players that Vernon had coached as juniors in the 1950s, Bob "Charlie" Brown, Graeme Gilmour, Barry Goodrick, Colin Brown, and Victor Westacott came to the fore and revived the Club's junior movement from its moribund state.

Rather than stop playing and coaching cold turkey, Vernon decided to play hockey with the Sydney University Hockey Club in 1959, where he was studying at the Arts Faculty of the University. Vernon had previously played for Sydney University at the Australian University Games in 1953, and was selected at these 1953 games into the Australian Universities Team. Vernon only played the one season with the University of Sydney, as by the following year Vernon's life and its living had moved westward.

Vernon was awarded a Blue from the University of Sydney Sport's Union in 2003 when he was 78 years of age, for state and national representative honours achieved while a student at the University of Sydney in 1953-1955, 1957 and 1959. He is also a Life Member of SU Sport's Union. In 2018 the GDHC's Board in consultation with the Sydney University Hockey Club Board decided to name the trophy for the inaugural Derby Day competition to be played annually between Glebe and Sydney University, the Eastaugh-Turner Cup. The English born Fredrick Eastaugh was an outstanding contributor to the Sydney University Hockey Club from 1907 -1947.

Vernon was also an outstanding success in his working and professional life.

Leaving school two years after moving to Glebe, Vernon found work labouring at Malleys Ltd in Alexandria. The link was that his father dealt with Malleys for his metal and fabrication requirements around the dairy, so at the time Vernon and his older brothers Milton, Algernon and Louis all got work there together. Vernon then took an apprenticeship at Malleys and became a Sheet Metal Worker 5½ years later. Lou subsequently moved to

General Manufacturing and Distributing a Company nearby and Vernon followed him there, where he stayed doing sheet metal work for another five years. During 1949 and subsequent years, as Vernon first became involved in coaching Glebe's junior players and junior teams, he recognised that he was good at teaching children the technical, teamwork, and emotional skills, of how to play hockey. Despite its many frustrations, for the most part he enjoyed this activity. His junior hockey coaching experiences lead Vernon to consider the possibility of a career change, from earning a living as a tradesman to becoming a teacher.

With this end in mind he attended night school in Ultimo for 3 years to obtain his Leaving Certificate, while working as a graded clerk in the public service. His final grades included five B's and when he went with this to apply for university enrolment he was told by the Registrar of the University of Sydney that "We don't want illiterates like you here." Disheartened but not disillusioned he stayed on as a clerk and went back to night school to do a repeat of his leaving certificate. He again got five B's and was not permitted to enrol at university. So he went back for the third time and that year he earned an A grade which then allowed him to enrol in the Arts Faculty of the University of Sydney in 1953. He graduated from the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in 1964, having focussed on Asian Studies and writing his thesis on the Indian Educationist and Nobel Literature Laureate, Rabindranath Tagore. He published his first book "Indonesian for Schools" co-authored with Hedwig Emanuels in 1967 (Science Press) which he completed alone after Emanuels' death midway through the writing. "Part Two" of this series was Vernon's own work and was published in 1968. Vernon was the first teacher of Indonesian language in schools in NSW. This was followed by awards of a Master of Education from the University of Sydney in 1973 with a thesis entitled "Ki Hadjar Dewantara and the Taman Siswa Movement in Indonesia," and a Master of Arts (Honours) from the University of New England in 1980 with a thesis entitled "A History of Indonesian-Chinese Relations in Indonesia since Independence: the Problems of Assimilation and Integration.". He published a further two textbooks on Indonesian language, "Bahasa Indonesia – Buku 1" and "Bahasa Indonesia – Buku 2", the first editions in 1986 (Hassanudin University Press) and the second editions in 1989 (Damai Publications). Vernon's final piece of writing was a dissertation entitled "The Chinese in Indonesia: A Socio-Cultural History" published in 2008 (VDM Verlag).

Following his 1959 appointment to Croydon Park Central School, Vernon introduced hockey there. One member of the Croydon Park Central School team eventually represented New South Wales. From Croydon Park School he was sent to a school in the Western Sydney suburb of St. Mary's to establish a course in Asian Languages and Asian Studies. At that time there was no hockey in the area so teams were formed in the school to play one another.

From St. Mary's, Vernon was appointed to a then new Teachers' College in Goulburn. The prospective teachers were taught the rudiments of hockey, but as there was not a competition suitable for them, it was hoped that they would join a club when they graduated from the college. Vernon's next appointment was at the Armidale College of Advanced Education in 1975 teaching Asian Studies. When the College became part of the University of New England in 1989 he continued lecturing there, with his country of special interest being Indonesia. His enthusiasm for providing authentic Indonesian cultural experiences was demonstrated by the number of educational tours he personally conducted with school and university students, as well as their families, to the significant cultural and historical sites of Indonesia over the years. A consistent feature of his tours was his intentional interactions with the materially poor locals in and around the Indonesian streets. Vernon would always have bags of clothing on hand to distribute to adults and children in need, which would be received with sincere thanks in reflection of his own simple and sincere generosity. He stayed at the University of New England until he fully retired in 2002. Since then Vernon has continued to live in Armidale.

Veterans Hockey started in Australia in 1980 and Vernon was an enthusiastic participant in these Veterans (Masters) Competitions at both NSW and Australian Championships from their inception. He played Masters

Hockey in the over 55s, 60s, 65s and 70s age groups, frequently representing both NSW and Australia at overseas tournaments.

In 1988, after playing for Australian Masters teams for many years, Vernon was asked to join an international hockey team called the “Alliance” centred in Belgium. It was truly an international team having players of 11 different nationalities. This team played in many Masters Tournaments. Vernon commented “It had been a wonderful experience meeting these players year after year.” Vernon continued to play Masters Hockey until he was aged in his late 80s.

After he moved to Armidale to work at the University of New England, Vernon joined the Ex Services Checkmates Hockey Club (ESC). He was a driving force at the Checkmates Hockey Club, for which he played for decades, as well as coaching junior teams. Impressively, he coached an Under 13 girls team at ESC into his 90s. He commenced coaching junior hockey teams in 1949 and continued coaching junior teams for 66 years, a most phenomenal display of generosity and community service.

For his outstanding services to the Ex Services Checkmates Hockey Club, Armidale, Vernon was awarded a Life-Membership of the Club. He has been inducted as a Sporting Legend by the Northern Inland Academy of Sport.

In 1974 Vernon married Theresia, an Indonesian woman who had moved to Goulburn to teach. Theresia had a Bachelor of Arts (Universitas Sanata Dharma, 1964) and Master of History (IKIP Bandung, 1969) prior to coming to Australia. She subsequently taught Indonesian language and culture at O’Connor Catholic High School in Armidale and then at the University of New England alongside Vernon. Together they have three children: Kathleen, Joseph and Damien Turner. Kathleen has a Bachelor of Asian Studies (Honours) from the Australian National University (1997) and PhD in Politics and International Studies from Murdoch University (2006). Joseph has a Bachelor of Medical Science (Honours) and PhD in Pharmacy from the University of Sydney awarded in 1998 and 2004 respectively, Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery from the University of Queensland (2008), Advanced Diploma of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and Fellowships of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Advanced Rural General Practice, and Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine. He is currently a GP obstetrician and Senior Lecturer in Medicine at the Universities of New England, New South Wales, and Queensland. Joseph played for Sydney University Hockey Club from 1995 – 2002, was Club President in 2000 and was awarded a University Gold for service to the Hockey and Gymnastics Clubs in 2002. Damien holds a Bachelor of Science (Honours) from the University of New England (2002), Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery from the University of Notre Dame (2009), and currently practices Psychiatry. He was awarded a Half Blue by the University of New England in 1998, was selected to play in the Australian Universities Hockey team in 1999, and was awarded a University Blue in 1999 by the University of New England.

Vernon’s Biography was complied with input from:

Harry Wark Glebe District Hockey Club Historian

Brett Radcliffe University of Sydney Hockey Club Historian

Paul Rogers, Vernon’s nephew

The Biography of Vernon on the Ex-Services Checkmates Hockey Club Armidale

Vernon’s three children Dr Joseph Turner, Dr Damien Turner, and Dr Kathleen Turner.