

PETRAS KULBYS: PRESIDENT, PARENTS AND FRIENDS ASSOCIATION 1958 - 1959



Petras Kulbys was President of the school's Parents and Friends Association in 1958 and appears to be the first local DP (Displaced Person) on the school's Advisory Council and P&F (Parents and Friends) Committee. It was the year that his older son Kest had started at the High School. It was also the first year that some non-Anglo migrant names appeared amongst the staff, including Messrs. Zahra, Sacharonok, and Ajayoglu. Given that Kulbys was a former teacher from Lithuania, one wonders whether they might have shared a sense of camaraderie through occasional parent teacher meetings. The school was known to use the bilingual skills of its staff and parent committee members to reach out to the community.

Petras Apolinaras Kulys (sic) was born in 1921 in Ziboliai, Lithuania, to Stanislavas Kulys and Anastazija Baranauskaite. He married Lydute "Lydia" Meta Dobot in Germany about 1944. She was from Strazdinia, Lithuania, and her parents were Matthaus Dobot and Wilhelmine "Minna" Schwandt. Petras and Lydia had two sons born in Germany: Kestutis "Kest" Stanislavas (1945) and Gerutis "Gerry" Bronislavas (1947).



The Kulbys (sic) family came to Australia in 1950 as Displaced Persons and were initially housed at Bonegilla. Petras was assigned work with the Victorian Railway in Fernbank, Victoria, while Lydia and the boys were housed in the Department of Immigration Holding Centre in Rushworth, Victoria.

Petras was a trained teacher but in Australia he eventually obtained work as a clerk. His allocated work with the railways (probably as a labourer) was during 1950/51, before he went to Maffra in 1951/52. By late 1952 the family were living independently in Yarraville, and in September 1952 they moved to their permanent home in Walmer Avenue, St Albans. It might have been a classic St Albans bungalow as in 1954 Petras was advertising for someone to finance him with £500 to finish build his weatherboard house.

Kest Kulbys started at St Albans State School in September 1952 having transferred from Yarraville Primary. At this stage Petras was working for Spaldings in Albion which was manufacturing rubber products including tennis balls and golf club handles. When Petras and Lydia applied for Naturalization as Australian Citizens in 1957, Petras was working as a clerk with Olympic Cables in Footscray.

Lydia's application for citizenship notes that she had been working as a domestic and later as a rubber worker with Rubbertex at Albion/Sunshine for about two years.



Dobat and Kulbys family members, Germany 1946.

Petras died in St Albans in 1978 at the relatively young age of 57; his remains were buried at Keilor East. Lydia may have moved in with her son Kest to Cowper Avenue. Gerry may have married Dorothy as they were living in Bernbank Avenue. Lydia died in St Albans in 2003 at age 84 years.

Little is known about the sons' lives in later years, except that both trained as teachers. Gerry came back to St Albans High School in the 1980s as a teacher, working with principal Neville Daynes. In the 1990s Kest was still working as a teacher and living in Rex Street St Albans. Kestutis 'Kest' Kulbys died in 2008 in St Albans at age 62 years.

Gerry may have retrained as a chiropractor and moved interstate. In the early 1990s in South Australia there was a Dr Gerry Kulbys a.k.a. Dr G B Kulbys B.Sc. (Chiro.) practicing and advertising his services at Christies Beach Chiropractic Centre. He must have moved to Queensland as in 2015 there was a Kulbys Chiropractic Service registered to Gerutis Bronislavas Kulbys.



Back L-R: Franz Pichler, Vladys Romanowski, Knut Werner, Wally Kosiak. Fourth: Robert Ciolli, Andreas Engert, John Hemiak, Albert Van der Kuyt, Kazimierz Grzankowski, Vladys Turok, Lorenz Schwab. Third: Gary Cameron, Leonid Troszczyi (both standing), Ira Dworjanin, Kaye Ashlin, Catherine Hatjiandreou, Jan Griffin, Tanya Korinsky, Jacky Handel, Karin Frede, Ieva Radiskevics, Ilse Jamonts, Ute Klewer. Second: Slowko Muc (standing) Olga Girgoff (almost obscured), Christa Albrecht (back-partly obscured) Valerie Davidoff, Alexandra Shegedyn, Elena Dagys, Tania Pavlova, Barry Rayner, Katrin Schwab, Heather Goddard, Maria Jaciow, Danuta Sackus. Front: Gerry Kulbys, John Dodson, Ivan Volkov.



Back: B Wale, J VandeKolk, B Gerlinger, J Kamiernack, C Kastanioti
Front: V Troszczyj, V Dasler, Paul Pavlov, J Castagna, K Kulbys.

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(L-R) M Dobes, J Trcka, G Kulbys, N Daynes, R Martin, M Polachek, F Azer, 1980.

Article written by Joe Ribarow.
School photos courtesy of Nick Szwed.