

CSAA HALL of FAME NOMINEE's OTHER DETAILS



Aldo Siketa

Born in Lastovo, Croatia 28th November 1929

Founding Father of North Geelong Soccer Club

President 1969 – 1976

ALDO'S JOURNEY

Following the aftermath of the Second World War, in 1953 three young single men - Aldo 23, Ivan 22 and Mario 17 left their homeland in Croatia to make the long journey to Australia on a ship called the "Seven Seas".

When they arrived in Australia, they had to enter an "Undertaking" with the Government and commit to work for two years. Life was not easy, in a foreign country with only each other to rely on. They worked hard, and in time we able to fund the remaining members of their family's migration to Australia.

Aldo and his brothers followed a well-known route through the migrant camp at Bonegilla to sugar cane cutting in the north before settling in Geelong.

LOVE OF SOCCER BEGINS WITH GEELONG CROATIA

The Melbourne Knights (Melbourne Croatia) was born in Geelong as Geelong Croatia in the early 1950's.

Aldo & his two brothers Mario & Ivan (who made the journey to Geelong from Croatia), played a key role in the establishment of Geelong Croatia.



Mario is in the front row, second from the left and Ivan is in the front row second from the right.

Although Aldo did not join the team as a player, both his brothers Mario & Ivan were part of the inaugural squad. As history shows, the team ended up relocating to Melbourne and subsequently became known as Melbourne Croatia.

FOUNDING FATHERS



Following the move of Geelong Croatia to Melbourne, there was a bit of a gap in Croatian football in Geelong until 1967 when **North Geelong** was founded by a group of pioneers who included **Mirko Hrkac** as president, **Ivan Sesar** as secretary, **Aldo Siketa, Vinko & Joe Radojevic**.

In 1969 Aldo Siketa took over the mantle of President from Mirko Hrkac and remained in that role until 1976. To this date, **his eight (8) year term makes him the longest serving continuous President.**

The image shows (left to right) three of the founding fathers - Vinko Radojevic, Aldo Siketa & Ivan Cesar with one of the Championship Trophies

Clubs in those days were self-help organizations and everyone was expected to contribute.

Aldo & his wife Anica had three children at the time and owned a local Fruit Shop located in Bell Park. This enabled him to financially provide the club with support in its early years of growth. His wife, Anica would wash all the playing strips every week. It was a true family affair.

Their home in Thorburn Street was not only walking distance from the shop but also from the home ground (located on the current site of the Holy Family Church).



After every game the team who did not have any club rooms would walk to the Siketa Family home and the garage would be used as the club rooms. Food and drink was always a plenty at the Siketa family home.

Message from Miro Zanic - Ovo je jedna slika CROATIA GEELONG !
Negdje 1974-5 god. Kod ALDE SIKETE !
Nije stvar u slici nego je bitno u cijoj smo mi to garazi !
U garazi covjeka kod kojega se festalo poslje utakmica .Ljudi
pisu svoje povjesti Croatije a naj manje se pise o ljudima koji
u za to sluzni ! O jednom dragom Hrvatuu a to je
ALDO SIKETA ,vidim malo se spominje Aldo Siketa u povjesti Croatije
na zalost ,Predsjednik cluba ,radnik ,njegova kuca i garaza je bila otvorena
svakom Hrvatuu godinama ,kada nas nije bilo puno Hrvata .U ostalom Aldo
Siketa je u Odboru UREGENJE BLEIGURSKOG SPOMENIKA !
Tu mozete vidit u knjigi " Cuvari Bleiburske Uspomene "
Hvala dragi ALDO SIKETA ,Miro ne zaboravlja Zaslužene Hrvate !



BIRTH OF NORTH GEELONG JUNIORS

It was at Aldo's family home in Thorburn Street, whilst the adults were celebrating after a game, that the children who were kicking the ball around the back yard, decided to walk the streets of Bell Park and enlist other interested children to start up a junior team.

That was the start of North Geelong's first junior team. All of Aldo's four sons played for North Geelong juniors over the years.

History now shows the North Geelong junior system has gone onto produce some international players like Josip Skoko; Steve Horvat; and Joey Didulica just to mention a few.

The image shown here is the first North Geelong Junior Soccer Team to represent the club. Front row: Left to right – Steve Radojevic, John Cicoratic, Mario Siketa, Robert Horvat and Chris Velcek. Back row: Left to right – Peter Vanjek, Eddy Kovacev, Milenko Dragicevic, Ivan Simic, John Dragicevic, and Ned Vasil.



PROMOTION FROM BDGSA TO VSF

The club subsequently relocated to Hume reserve, whilst at the same time the Siketa family moved to Bruce Street, again the Siketa House was walking distance from Hume Reserve. During his tenure as President, Aldo and Anica had a further four (4) children. The tradition continued at Bruce Street, where after every game everyone would retreat to the garage.



In 1972 Under the guidance of Aldo Siketa, Vinko Radojevic and Steve Horvat, North Geelong followed the lead of Corio and Bell Park which had re-joined the VSF competition and was placed in the Provisional League.

However, an altercation involving the referee during a match against Werribee resulted in the expulsion of North, which returned to the BGDSA (Ballarat and Geelong District Soccer Association) for the next few years.



North won the league in 1973 and again in 1977, by which time had been changed to the Western Victoria Soccer Association. This was the beginning of North's climb to the top level in Victorian Soccer. In this period the club was beginning to grow in strength, leaders such as Aldo Siketa, Steve Horvat, Mirko Hrkac were instrumental in this time.

Aldo also served as the President of the Western Victorian Soccer Association (WVSA) for 3 years.

NORTH GEELONG CELEBRATES 50 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

In 2017 Aldo was a special guest at North Geelong Soccer Club's **50th anniversary celebration function**, which was held at the Croatian Hall, Separation Street, Bell Park.



North Geelong remains a family club and always has been but is also a club of families.

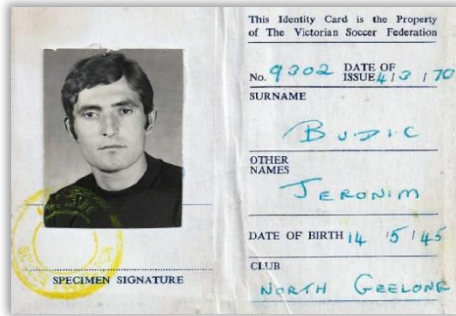
Think of the names which are at the heart of this club. The Siketa's, Hrkac's, Sesar's, Horvat's, Skoko's, Radojevic's, Matijevic's, Desa's, Deak's, Demos, Roso's, and Parmac's.



In the above photograph Aldo can be seen with his four sons – all of whom played for the club (two of whom were born during his Presidency). In the photograph on the left, Aldo is being presented with a club Guernsey.



TRAGEDY HITS CLUB



In the 1970's North Geelong Soccer Club suffered the tragic death of one of its key young up and coming players – Jeronim (Jerko) Budic

Jerko was killed in a motor vehicle accident on

Princess Highway whilst travelling to Geelong to play.

Aldo was instrumental in arranging the repatriation of his body to Croatia to be buried. His family was forever grateful.

ZAHVALA

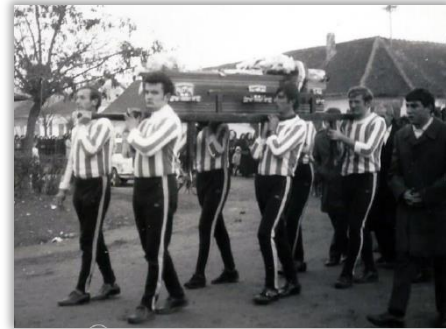
Povodom tragične smrti našeg dragog sina, brata, ujaka i strica

BUDIĆ JERKA

najtoplije se zahvaljujemo, nama nepoznatim, svim njegovim prijateljima u dalekoj Australiji, koji su u tim za nas teškim trenucima nastojali ublažiti našu bol i dragog nam pokojnika otpremili u njegov rodni kraj.

Još jednom svima hvala na izrazima saučešća i svemu što ste učinili za nas i dragog nam pokojnika.

Ožalošćeni: otac, majka, brat, sestre, šogor, snaja i ostala rodbina



After all these years, Aldo has continued to keep in touch with the family.

WOMENS SOCCER - PIONEERS



With the FIFA Women's World Cup scheduled to be held in Australia in 2023, who would have thought that back in the 1970's Aldo was instrumental in the establishment of the first North Geelong Women's Soccer Team, with one of his daughters (Toni) forming part of the squad.

His daughter also went onto win Miss North Geelong in 1971.



TRADITION CONTINUES



Although his service to North Geelong Soccer Club came to an end in 1977 when he handed over the mantle to Ivan Marks, Aldo continued to support the club in any way that he could. Whether that be in sponsorship; membership; driving the bus; or working at the club.



Over the journey all his sons have also played with North Geelong, as have his grandchildren and more recently his great grandchildren have continued the tradition.

North Geelong Soccer Club is in the family DNA. Left image is of Keanu Dulic (Aldo's great grandson), and the Right image is Malee Siketa (Aldo' great granddaughter).



Even though he stood down as the President of North Geelong, Aldo maintained his involvement in the local Croatian community and was instrumental in the establishment of the Lado Folk Dance Group in Geelong. He served as President of the Group from 1977 to 1988.

Aldo would arrange for Lado to perform concerts at North Geelong Soccer Club functions to assist with fundraising for the club. He continued to support the club in every way possible.

Aldo was a key driver in the construction of the Croatian Community Centre (CCC) located in Cox Road, which is now the home of Lado.

He lived on site in a caravan during the construction phase of the project was the level of his commitment.



Over the years there have been many young players from North Geelong Soccer Club that joined Folkloric Group and Aldo always supported co-operation of working together (sport and folklore) for youth to socialize, develop and grow.

One of North Geelong's greatest players – Steve Vukovic was a member of the dancing group at the same time as playing for North Geelong.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Whilst Aldo's journey with local community involvement started with North Geelong Soccer Club, he then went on to be involved in Geelong Ethnic Community Council

Aldo would in community programs, helped with the elderly, was a volunteer group leader, a bus driver and did the BBQ's, there was nothing Aldo would not help with when it came to the local Croatian community.

FUNDRAISING & INDEPENDANCE

Aldo, never one to rest on his laurels, with Croatia going to war in the early 1990's, seeking independence, Aldo albeit in his 60's became heavily involved in key fundraising activities to help the Croatian cause.

For his efforts he was awarded the **Bleiberg Medal**.

One of Aldo's sons (Anthony) left Australia with several other Geelong local boys and joined the Croatian Army and fought in the war.



Aldo was on his island of Lastovo, Croatia when the declaration of independence was made, and he proudly climbed the local mountain where and pulled down the Yugoslav flag to replace it with the Croatian Flag.

AWARDS

Aldo has always been an Initiator, supporter, promoter, and a true visionary.

Over his lifetime Aldo has received several Awards because of his community efforts and contribution.

- Bleiberg Medal
- Centenary Certificate and
- Senior Australian Certificate

Aldo, at the ripe old age of 94, he is the last surviving member of the five (5) founding fathers.

He has always remained a modest and unassuming man, never one looking for accolades.

Whilst over the years he has achieved many things, clearly one of his greatest highlights was his involvement in the birth of the North Geelong (Croatia) Soccer Club.

We (the family) think it would be fitting if he was duly recognized by the Croatian Soccer Association of Australia for his contribution and efforts.



Another championship celebration