



A Reflection on Clif Wright

by Bob Patterson, Philadelphia Squash Friend

Liking Clif was easy....

Quick to captivate with his engaging smile. Backed by an unusual sparkle in his eyes. An accompanying lightning quick wit. And a hearty, throaty chuckle. All perfectly synchronized for effect.

Liking Clif was instantaneous. You wanted to be his friend. You wanted him to like you.

But he was always a step ahead. He made you feel like a friend, that he was genuinely interested in you and that being there with you, at that moment, was the most important place that he could be.

Even if you met him only moments ago. Nothing about Clif was predictable.

Except, maybe, that you always looked forward to seeing him again. Next time. Who knows when but, surely, next time.

Except, maybe, his squash attire. The sagging blue shorts and his stretched and tattered blue-collared shirt were as predictable as his 20-minute late arrival. All completed by a battered pair of court shoes exhausted from previous tours of duty. (Clif could be tough on shoes.)

Except, maybe, his competitiveness. The blue-collared shirt he wore in every match was

symbolic. He was relentless, tenacious and unshakeable. Hard-working, maybe less gifted, but always harder-working. Every match, every point, every shot. No excuses. He simply refused to give up.

Ironically, some called it 'heart'.

Except, maybe, his legacy. We've heard the stories from the Williams football crowd. We knew 'that' Clif. We loved 'that' Clif.

Except, maybe, watching others misjudge him. It was certainly not advisable to 'judge this book by its cover'. Such a 'reading' often led to a beating. Opponents often smirked at his waddle entering the court and begrudgingly admired that swagger as he left it.

Except, maybe, watching the faces of his friends. Those when he passed away in our arms, helpless to help. Those who heard the news and gasped. Those who travelled to remember him on that cold November day, to shed a tear and connect with others who were lucky to know him. And, importantly, those who have felt all of the above and have gathered here to remember and continue his legacy.

You left us too early, Clif. But we will take it from here. You left your mark with us. We will make your mark on others.