

Nathan's Bequest looks to why depression happens

by Joan Richards OAM

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Professor Doctor Geoffrey Gallop has launched the Rotary Club of Sydney CBD's Nathan's Bequest Scholarship.

The scholarship is named in honour of Nathan Trepezanov who suffered depression. He was the son of a Sydney CBD member.

On January 16, 2006, Nathan Trepezanov took his own life at 21. Nathan was a brilliant, personable and highly-educated man who had travelled the world, was fluent in five languages and had a loving family and a wide circle of friends. Like so many young men and women in their early twenties these days, Nathan contracted an episode of depression.

Unable to speak about it with those who loved him and could have helped, he quickly resolved that taking his life was the only solution to his secret problem. In the early morning of January 16, 2006, he jumped to his death from the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

The heartbreaking loss of a young man, the agony and bewilderment suffered by his family, friends and Rotarians convinced the Rotary Club of Sydney CBD and the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund to do something tangible with Nathan's Bequest.

Nathan's family wants young people to understand that depression is not something of which to be ashamed, suicidal thinking is an expected feature of depression and such thinking is transient.

Nathan's family want governments and the Australian community also to understand this.

Youth suicide is a problem our whole society must face as 25 per cent of Australians will suffer at least one episode of depression in a lifetime.

The ignominy of this illness, and the suicidal thinking that goes with it, is a killer in itself.

Nathan's Bequest is a three-year scholarship worth \$A25,000 a year.



Nathan Trepezanov whose untimely death led to the Rotary Club of Sydney CBD, N.S.W., and the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund (ARHRF) launching the Nathan's Bequest Scholarship.

The scholarship will enable a PhD scholar to study and investigate depression and suicide.

The inaugural scholarship will be granted early in 2007 and be managed by the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund.

Dr. Gallop, a former premier of Western Australia, is the current Professor and Director of the Graduate School of Government at the University of Sydney, N.S.W. He is a self-confessed depression sufferer.

Launching Nathan's Bequest, he delivered a magnificent address and told of his own experiences with depression which led to him retiring as the premier of Western Australia in January 2006, the same day as Nathan's suicide.

Dr. Gallop referred to his close ties with Rotary and his strong support for the good work of Rotary International. In his 20 years in the West Australian Parliament he had developed a close relationship with the Rotary Club of Victoria Park.



Professor Doctor Geoff Gallop, a former premier of Western Australia, is the current Professor and Director of the Graduate School of Government at the University of Sydney, with President Judith O'Neill, of the Rotary Club of Sydney CBD, N.S.W., and Past President David Brawn, of the Rotary Club of Sydney CBD, at the dinner when Nathan's Bequest Scholarship was launched.