

Allan Davis



I have owned my apartment in Solander at Regatta Wharf since mid-June 2000 which I bought while the building was being completed. I was one of the first persons to move into the building.





I was a volunteer at the Sydney Olympics in 2000. One of the first great things about living at Regatta Wharf during this period was the convenience to public transport to the Olympic grounds at Homebush.



One of the great attractions for me to move to Pyrmont was the closeness to public transport, walking distance to the CBD and Darling Harbour and the beautiful outlook over Sydney Harbour, Balmain and the North Shore.

I was born and raised in Sydney, second generation on my Mother's side (Russian and American descendants) and fifth generation on my Father's side (Eastern European). With my younger sister we had a wonderful childhood living in South Coogee, playing in the sandhills opposite and attending South Coogee Public up the road.



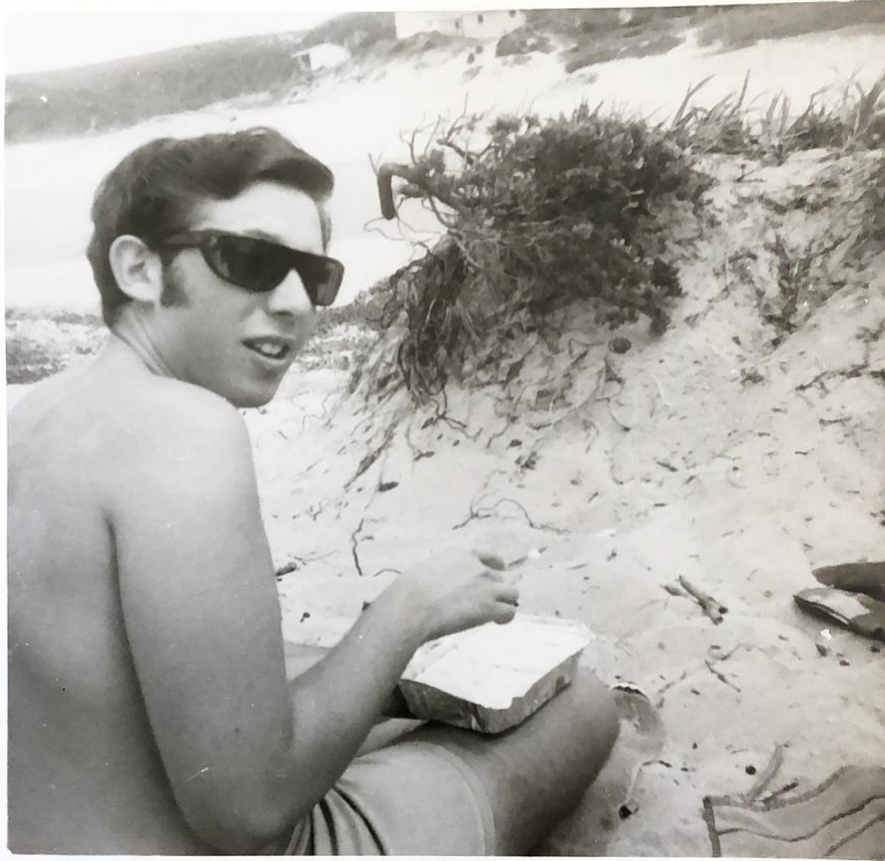
My Father was in business with my Uncle and at that time they were the owners of the largest bedding manufacturers in Australia called David Dawn.

During my high school years I attended Sydney Grammar School and we lived in Vaucluse during this time. I was an average student but generally enjoyed my learning experience at Grammar.



Completing my HSC I became an Executive Trainee, a three year course at Grace Bros and also started at TAFE studying business and economics. It was a great experience with a fabulous bunch of other trainees, many who still remain close friends.

It was also the time of conscription during the Vietnam War. I joined the Navy Reserves so I wouldn't have to go to the war. I spent every Thursday night at HMAS Watson on admin and a week a year at camp usually at HMAS Kuttubul at Kings Cross as well as the occasional trip on a patrol boat as assistant cook!! It was supposed to be for six years but thankfully I was able to get discharged after three years. Thankfully no photos exist of me in my navy uniform!!



I also bought my first apartment in Bronte just after I turned 21. At the end of my traineeship I took a gap year to travel extensively around the UK and Europe including the USSR. I rented a house in Ealing Broadway which I shared with Australian friends who were also travelling.

This was the start of my ongoing love and obsession to travel the world. Pre-COVID I have been fortunate to have visited 83 different countries including some unusual places such as North Korea, Ethiopia, Namibia, Myanmar, the Baltic States to name a few, and hoping more will be added in the not too distant future.

On returning to Australia I rejoined Grace Bros for a short time working with Michael Grace, son of the Chairman, at Head Office. Then I was offered the position of Deputy Store Manager with Myer at Carlingford.

At the end of the 70s I was recruited by a South African retailer, Edgars. At that time the gold price was very high and the South African economy was expanding rapidly. I had a position in the buying office which I did not enjoy. And I was headhunted by another South African retailer, Truworths, as a Regional Manager for a chain of stores.

I spent three years in South Africa which was a wonderful learning experience especially working with such a diverse workforce. One of the greatest highlights was being invited to one of my black staff's wedding in Soweto at a time when whites were not allowed into Soweto. The longer I lived in South Africa the more angry I became with the apartheid system and decided to return to Sydney.

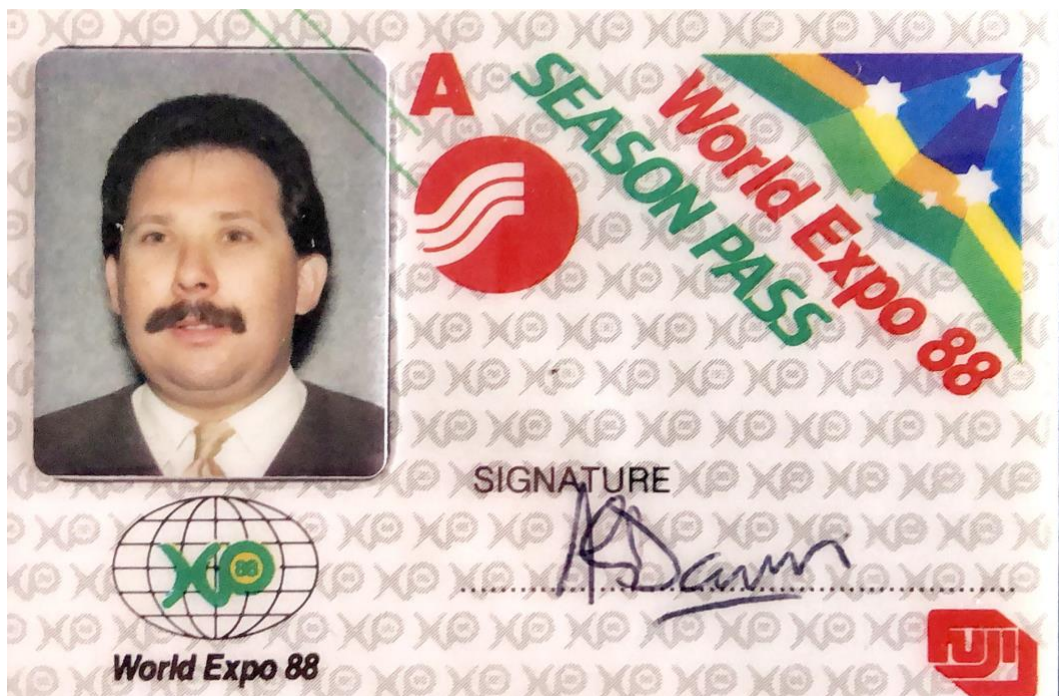


Back in Sydney I moved to a new apartment I purchased in Lane Cove. It was a large three bedroom apartment so that when my young niece and nephew stayed over they had their own rooms.

I was recruited as State Manager of a homemaker chain of franchised stores (dreadful job!) and was then offered the position of NSW & ACT Manager for the SUSSAN chain of stores where I stayed for about three years.

Deciding on a career change after many years in the retail industry I moved into the shopping centre industry which was still related to retail but different. I was the Centre Manager of Bass Hill Plaza. I moved to a lovely garden apartment at Mosman Bay.

Then the Company offered me a move to Brisbane just before Bicentennial and Expo celebrations to open a new upmarket shopping centre at Toowong Village. It was a great time to be living in Brisbane as it grew from a regional town to an exciting city during the Expo year. I spent most weekends and evenings at Expo on the south bank of the Brisbane River which included a close encounter with Queen Elizabeth on opening day!



I moved back to Sydney after being offered the Centre Manager's role at what was then one of the most prestigious shopping centres in Australia, Centrepoin in Sydney owned by AMP, when AMP was one of the best property owners in the country. During a fourteen year career with AMP Shopping Centres I also had the opportunity to manage and develop Macquarie Centre at Ryde.



(Yes, that is Fergie and me at Macquarie Centre)

I was also Centre Manager of Warringah Mall, for three years where I also managed two large extensions. And then I became Regional Manager for the AMP Shopping Centres in New Zealand and NSW.



(Neil Diamond & me at Warringah Mall)

Another career change when I became a Partner of a large Strata Management business based in Willoughby. And I was the first Strata Manager of Jones Bay Wharf, Pyrmont, the largest property in the portfolio.

After three years in strata management a colleague from my AMP days asked if I would like to be his Deputy General Manager at one of the most prestigious buildings in Shanghai. The Shanghai Centre was the first western partnered development in Shanghai which included apartments, offices, retail and convention centre.



(Some of my staff)

Loving travel and wanting another opportunity to work overseas I grabbed the opportunity with both hands and ended up staying in China for nearly eight years. It was the greatest experience of my life in which I could write an entire book on my time there.

I spent nearly two years at Shanghai Centre and then joined an Irish Development company as Director of Retail of China. They were developing shopping centres and office buildings around China. It was a wonderful experience.



I returned to Australia at the end of 2013 retiring after 43 years in the workforce. And I am now enjoying Pyrmont and the wonderful friends I have made in the community, travelling when we are allowed and being grateful for a great life.

