



FAREWELL BYFIELDS | FROM SIMON NORTHEY

Well, after almost 40 years at Byfields and 33 of them spent as a partner it's time to call it a day!

My Background

I'm a Northam boy born and bred, did my schooling locally and then attended Curtin University to complete my Bachelor of Business. My parents were in business and were clients of the then Byfield Beavis & Co. My father played golf with Ken Byfield and whilst Ken had retired, he put a good word in for me with the current partners of the firm. A meeting was arranged during my third year of Uni and Steve Bowen (then Partner) offered me a job to start in January the following year, consequently, I've never completed a resume!

That start date was 19th January 1987 and back then everything was processed manually, no computers except for data entry to produce financial statements. Electric typewriters were the latest office equipment, correspondence were manually typed, tax returns were hand typed in triplicate from ATO supplied returns and financial statement workpapers were completed manually as well. I remember lots of paper and noise in the office, but our systems were well organised and very efficient.

I was offered the premature opportunity to manage and run our recently acquired Merredin office in July 1989. I took up the challenge and in hindsight this was the making of me, I learnt quickly and worked with some of the best clients you could ever meet.

With our firm continually expanding I then came back to Northam office in 1992 to take up an associate role and became a partner on 1 July 1993 at the age of 26. I would spend the rest of my career with Byfields as a partner, now called directors, in our Northam office.

I have always thought being involved in the local community was very important and as such I've worked at committee level, with business associations such as Northam Chamber of Commerce and Avon Community Development Foundation and personal clubs including Northam Running Club, Northam & Districts Little Athletics to name a couple.

Highlights

Becoming one of the youngest people to become a partner in the firm and now the longest serving person of the firm's history is something I'll treasure for the rest of my life. Having the unwavering support of my lovely wife Larissa and family is definitely another personal highlight.

From a business perspective being part of the group that has driven significant growth of the firm is a definite highlight and working with such wonderful clients is another. Being part of people's business journey, watching them achieve their goals and having a hand in their success is the real buzz in this industry.

Listening to clients, showing genuine interest in their business, and helping them navigate through the many business hurdles, is what I call getting your hands dirty!

I believe you need to be hardwired to help people to truly get the most out of this public accounting profession.

Things I've learnt

I've been privileged to work with many successful people and learnt the following;

- Continued hard work is the cornerstone of achievement.
- Doing something you have a flair for and love means you will invest the necessary time and energy.
- Setting goals and revisiting them often keeps your vision on track.
- Understanding what drives your profit and seeking to improve those drivers maximises yearly results.
- Staying up to date is imperative and changing with the times keeps your business relevant.
- Seeking and accepting sound advice from your partners in business makes the journey easier.
- Finally, spend less than you make, invest the balance and then let time and compound interest do the rest to become financially independent.

Thank you and Farewell

I want to sincerely thank past and present directors for their friendship and unconditional support, the great staff I've worked with, and all the wonderful clients that have included me in their business journey.

No doubt we will bump into each other as my wife and I have no plans to leave Northam just yet, but we are looking forward to our next chapter.

Farewell and stay safe.

