

## Jim Sharman

..... after leaving school, did not immediately gravitate to the Grade ranks, unlike his St Joseph's team mates. He returned to his home town of Narrandera where he played some Australian Rules after having a few games of rugby union with the Sydney University and Drummoyne. He also represented NSW in rugby union against a Victorian selection in 1933.



**St Joseph's College First XV Premiers and GPS Champions 1931**

Left: Jim Sharman - Right A. "Sen" Black

However, Wests had targeted the young Jim Sharman, needing a good fullback to replace Frank McMillan who was away with the Kangaroos and was nearing retirement. The Narrandera Argus on 7 July 1933 lead with a headline; "Narrandera Boy's Tempting Offer" and reported the following story:

" Mr Jim Sharman, son of Mr Jimmy Sharman, of boxing fame, has received a tempting offer from the Western Suburbs Rugby League Football Club. The offer provides for a position in Murdock's sports department, free board and three pounds per match in which he plays, as remuneration for his services as full back with the Western Suburbs team.

Should Jim accept he will be required to fill the position in the team vacated by Frank McMillan, who has left for England as captain of the Australian Rugby League team. Jim Sharman came into prominence as a full back in rugby union football, having played in that position with St Joseph's College, the Sydney University and Drummoyne teams. Lately he has been gaining prominence as an Aussie Rules player, being a member of the Narrandera Imperial team."

Jim Sharman did not immediately take up Wests offer but did arrive for the 1934 season. At this point, Frank McMillan had returned from the Kangaroo tour and was appointed as captain of Wests in their premiership year. Frank played all but two of the competition rounds in 1934 and these two matches provided the opportunity for Jim Sharman to make his First Grade debut. Apart from the two First Grade games, Jim played ten Reserve Grade games that year.

Jim had to compete against Frank McMillan once more for the Fullback position in 1935, but Frank who had played with Wests since 1921 was at the end of his career and when he was injured mid-season, Jim made the fullback position his own. Jim Sharman played nine First Grade and seven Reserve Grade games in 1935 including a narrow semi-final loss to a strong Eastern Suburbs.

From then on until Jim Retired in 1939, he only ever played First Grade. He shared the captaincy of the Wests First Grade team with coach Cec Fifield in 1938 and again with Albert McGuinness in 1939. However, in August 1939, Jim Sharman announced his retirement from Wests and rugby league. He

had lost his keenness and was quoted saying that "in the circumstances it is time to make room for a younger player."

Sharman indicated that he leaves football without any regrets. He had been well treated by the Western Suburbs Club and the players were a particularly happy family. It was noted that Sharman just missed greatness as a full back. He was in the running for inclusion in the last Kangaroo team for England and had been on the verge of State selection on several occasions.

Jim Sharman played fifty nine First Grade, seventeen Reserve Grade and nine City Cup matches in his six seasons at Wests. He became a Selector in 1940 and was subsequently made a Life Member of the Club in 1998.

After his retirement from rugby league, Jim Sharman became part of the Sharman travelling boxing troupe in country areas and at the Sydney Royal Easter Show each year. He had been helping his father, Jim Sharman senior with the boxing troupe since the age of fourteen. He also became a sports journalist during the 1940's. Jim took over the boxing troupe from his father in 1955.

The catch cry of, "**Who'll take a glove?**" and "**A round or two for a pound or two**" were some of the famous Sharman catchcries recognised across the country.



**Jim Sharman's Boxing Troupe 1971**

Jim Sharman junior inherited what he described was "a bloody good business." He continued touring with the boxing troupe until 1971, when new regulations barred boxers fighting more than once a week. It ended an Australian sporting phenomena that operated for almost six decades. In 2003, Jim Sharman was honoured with the title of "Show Legend" by the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW.

Like his father, Jim Sharman had one son called James. James "Jim" Sharman went into showbusiness but not the boxing tent. The Sydney theatre producer won world acclaim when he co-wrote and directed *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* in 1975.

Jim Sharman moved to Sydney's Eastern Suburbs during the early 1940's and lived the remainder of his life in that district. He died at the Sacred Heart Hospice, Darlinghurst, NSW in April 2006 and was cremated at the Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park.