

Love of life and hard work marked pioneer's passion

LIZ MCKINNON

"TEN lives rolled into one".

That is the way Hamilton's Rod Dyer lived his adventurous life from running million-acre West Australian properties to operating a successful outback tourism enterprise, it was a fast-paced ride.

The outback pioneer and farming magnate died peacefully last month at his family property, Pierrepont, after suffering from kidney failure.

He was 83.

He is survived by his partner Roz Lawson and four children Kris, Derek, John and Cathie, six grandchildren and one great granddaughter.

John, who is the managing director of Mr Dyer's successful Air Adventure Australia touring company, said his father's greatest passion in life had been work, clocking up more flying hours than a commercial airline pilot during his lifetime.

"Ten lives rolled into one. That's a good way to describe his life," John grinned.

Up until Mr Dyer was 80 he continued to take tourists up in the air on his company's air tours, which for more than 30 years have provided tourists with small luxury boutique air safaris to some of Australia's most remote and picturesque locations.

John said some of his earliest memories of watching his father in the plane.

"Since I was a tiny kid I would stand in between the seats in the aeroplane cockpit. Before I was even in secondary school I was all around Australia flying with him," John said.

"He led his last tour when he was 80. He stopped flying about 20 years ago though. As a bush pilot he had flown well over 10,000 hours – it's a lot more than most airline pilots."

Mr Dyer launched the business in 1977 while running a million acre cattle station in the Kimberley.

He had held the lease on Ellenbrae station for 12 years, transforming the desolate land into a viable production, paving an airstrip to allow others to get into the area which was the stepping stone for the tours to begin.

He spent his time travelling between the Kimberley and his grazing property, Pleasant Hills at Digby, which his son Derek now runs with his family, before moving to Pierrepont, on Mt Pierrepont.

John said his father would be well remembered for his love of life, the land and being a hard worker.

"He was a real character, a real people person and an entertainer as well," he said.



ROD Dyer, who passed away last month, has been remembered for his hard work ethic and love of life.

Pic: SUPPLIED.

"He did things that gave him enjoyment ... having the tourism business filled his need to hang out with people and entertain them.

"He had a real sense of adventure. He grew up on a sheep property just outside Ararat, Elmhurst, so he has always been from a pastoral background and he sort of fell into the tourism industry but he loved it, because of the human element of it."