Eric Graham Hilliam
Farmer, grazer and community leader

Born: March 19, 1933; Port Pirie
Died: June 25, 2005; Adelaide

E R I C H I L L I A M has been described by those who knew him as a man of courage and grace. He was a farmer at Baroona, in the Mid North, who devoted much of his time to community work, his church and his family.

Born to John and Eva Hilliam in Sister Bray’s Hospital at Port Pirie, Eric went to school on horseback. When he transferred to the Baroona Technical School in Adelaide, he joined the St John Ambulance Cadets, and was the secretary/treasurer for three years.

While in Adelaide, he learned the guitar and raised money for charities. After a couple of years, Eric left Adelaide and returned to Baroona to work on the farm. In 1956, he began flying, gained his licence to fly Tiger Moths and was a founder member of the Aero Club in Port Pirie.

With wife Rosalie and one-time professional comedian Tom Hardie, they produced variety concerts, touring nearby towns and the city. The money raised from these productions was given to the Mambary Creek School and the Port Germain Methodist Church. Eric was founder chairman of the local high school bus committee, obtaining grants for school buses in the Mambary Creek area. He was secretary/treasurer of the Mambary Creek School committee for six years.

Eric also was a member of the high school council, represented the Port Germain District Council, was a member of the Port Germain Agricultural Bureau, serving as chairman; member of Port Germain St John Ambulance Council; and member of the Port Germain Institute.

He was fire control supervisor for Port Germain and Mt Remarkable District councils, member of Port Germain CPS and counsellor of Port Pirie Lifeline.

Eric served on the Melrose District Council and was involved with the development plan for the State Planning Authority Regulations for the Flinders Ranges.

Due to his ill health, in 1984 the family sold the farm “Coldburn” at Baroona and moved to One Tree Hill, ending a family tradition and commitment to the Baroona area of 100 years. While at One Tree Hill, with the help of cousin Pat Hilliam and daughter Margaret, Eric kept the sheep, horse, goat and sheep dog and kept the family book for publishing.

Eric was a forward-thinking and innovative man, and his interests were many and varied. He was admired and respected by all who knew him, and was known and loved for his compassion, caring and gentle nature.

Eric is survived by his wife, Rosalie, of 52 years, and two daughters, Vicki and Minetta Gege.