Don Alexander 12 September 1927 to September 3 2015

Don Alexander was a water engineer who spent much of his career in the Engineering and Water Supply Department, precursor to what is now the South Australian Water Corporation. However, his professional role was of considerable significance to South Australian agriculture. The E&WS Department was responsible for running the Riverland irrigation districts, later privatised, on which South Australia’s horticultural and viticultural industries were built. He chaired the South Australian Water Resources Council and broadened it to contain community representatives. The Council oversaw the operations of the regionally-based Water Resources Committees which made recommendations about water management in the prescribed water districts of the state. These Committees were later replaced by the Catchment Water Management Boards and more recently by the Natural Resource Management Boards. Don also was Director of the former Department of Lands which had responsibility of pastoral land management in the North of South Australia through the Pastoral Board.

The obituary below appeared in The Advertiser on March 26 2016

MILESTONES

DON ALEXANDER

Director of E&WS

Born: September 12, 1927. Tumut
Died: September 3, 2015. Daw Park

Education: Woodville High, University of Adelaide
Achievements: In charge of SA’s water supplies
Family: Survived by daughters Elke, Felicity and Meg

Don had retired in 1990 although he continued to serve as the presiding member of the SA Water Resources Council until 1993.

In 2008, he was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for his services to engineering, particularly the water supply sector.

He was a Fellow of the Institute of Engineers Australia and was recognised by the Australian Water Association for service to the Australian water industry. Don was a committed member of the Freemasons, rising steadily through the orders until he was appointed deputy grand master in 1988.

In 1991, he was installed as grand master in the first-ever public grand installation ceremony. He oversaw a modernisation of Freemasonry, especially its transparency and management.

Don had married Daryl in 1959, and she supported him throughout his career. They travelled widely in the first years after his retirement but she died in 1995.

He was active as a company monitor for the Australian Shareholders Association and also served as a volunteer at the Art Gallery of SA.