eulogyai.nz

Tēnā koutou katoa.

I’m standing here as Hemi Wiremu Thompson’s mokopuna.
To me, he was simply Koro Hemi —
my anchor, my storyteller, my biggest supporter.

Koro was born in Gisborne on 22 November 1939,
raised on the East Coast with Ngāti Porou strength in his bones,
and he slipped away peacefully in Napier at 84,
still teaching us, even at the end, what quiet dignity looks like.

He wore many hats and none of them for show.
In his early years he was a shearer —
quick on the handpiece, gentle on the flock,
the kind of speed that made others watch,
and the kind of care that made farmers trust him.
Later he planted his feet in Hawke’s Bay soil,
tending apples and peaches, rows neat as his handwriting,
turning seasons into kai,
and kai into gatherings.
If you left his place hungry, that was on you.

Koro was a fluent speaker of te reo Māori,
a patient guide for rangatahi,
a community rugby coach who believed in two things equally:
a strong tackle and a kind word.
He backed kapa haka with the same pride he showed on the sideline,
knowing that strength has many forms.

He was the devoted husband of our Nan, Mere.

Create your own personalised speech at eulogyai.nz

Dad to Rangi, Moana, and Pita.
Proud Koro to seven mokopuna who knew where the best hugs lived.
He was generous, cheeky, wise, and endlessly patient —
strong in the ways that made you feel safe,
tender in the ways that made you feel seen.

My favourite memory is simple and it glows.
Dusk on the marae veranda,
the day softening,
Koro beside me, guitar resting on his knee.
He taught me a waiata, slow and careful,
then told me the whakapapa behind it —
who we come from, why the words matter,
how a song can hold a river, a mountain, a name.
He didn’t say, this is important.
He just sang, and I understood.

Koro loved the small good things that make a life full.
Fishing off the wharf, lines quiet in the water.
A few guitar strums after dinner, the last notes hanging like steam.
Carving small taonga at the table,
wood shavings catching the evening light.
Kūmara beds checked at first light,
and early morning walks on Wainui Beach,
footprints that the tide knew and kept for a moment longer.

He measured his days with values, not clocks.
Whānau first, always.
Manaakitanga that showed up as extra chairs, extra plates, extra time.
Tikanga held with humility.
Giving without a ledger, without expecting it back.
He could be cheeky —
that eyebrow lift that meant a joke was on the way —
but every laugh carried a lesson,

and every lesson was kind.

Create your own personalised speech at eulogyai.nz

What we’ll miss is easy to list and hard to carry.
His quiet “kia kaha” in your ear when you needed it most.
The hug that lasted just long enough for you to breathe again.
The way he could turn an ordinary day into a story,
a walk into a wānanga,
a peach into proof that the world is sweet on purpose.

Koro didn’t make speeches about legacy.
He planted it.
In trees that still lean toward the sun.
In kids who now switch to te reo without thinking.
In teams who play hard and help each other up.
In mokopuna who know the tune and the history.

Today is a celebration of that.
If you hear a guitar later, sing.
If you see the kai, don’t be shy — he wouldn’t have been.
We’re wearing bright colours because he filled rooms with colour,
and because grief and joy can sit side by side and not argue.

Koro Hemi, thank you.
For the stories, the songs, the ocean mornings,
for apple boxes that doubled as seats,
for the smell of lanolin on your jersey,
for peach juice running down our chins and you saying,
“Good — that’s how you know it’s ready.”

We’ll carry your “kia kaha,”
your patience,
your cheeky grin,
and we’ll keep doing the small good things, properly.
We’ll look after Nan.

Create your own personalised speech at eulogyai.nz

We’ll look after each other.

Haere rā, Koro.
Moe mai, moe mai, moe mai rā.

And to everyone here — thank you for being part of his story.
Waiata and shared kai will follow.
Let’s celebrate him the way he lived:
together, with full plates and full hearts.

This speech was created with eulogyai.nz.Answer a few questions and generate your own personalised speech now ateulogyai.nz

Create your own personalised speech at eulogyai.nz