Leongatha author tells King Richard's story

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Leongatha author Dan Eddy will launch his book 'King Richard: the story of Dick Reynolds' at the Korumburra Middle Hotel on August 22.

A CHANCE encounter with his idol and Essendon football legend Dick Reynolds at the age of 15 sparked the start of Leongatha author Dan Eddy's journey to penning the AFL's star's biography.

"I met Dick when I was 15 walking through the centre of Melbourne and I recognised his face," Dan said.

"I was surprised that I recognised him, which surprised me and then he gave me his autograph."

Dan still has this autograph today and says after meeting the man who has been officially voted Essendon's greatest player, he wanted to learn more.

A surprised Dan found there were no books or biographies dedicated to the official AFL Legend, and in 2001 Dan approached the Essendon Football Club, pitching the idea of writing a biography on their club great.

"They were really keen on it," Dan said.

"The Reynolds family were also happy for me to do it which was great."

So for the next four years Dan interviewed more than 200 people across the nation and spent hundreds of hours at the State Library.

Now the finished product, King Richard: the Story of Dick Reynolds, is ready to be launched.

"It is surreal to see the actual finished book," Dan says.

"I never imagined it, so it's great." In between his research, Dan also managed to complete his Master of Degree at Victoria University on Reynolds' impact on the Essendon community.

The book tells the previously untold story of Reynolds, covering his impressive career which spanned from 1963 until 1981. It included 520 games, 442 goals and three Brownlow Medals.

Dan's extensive research led him to uncovering many interesting facts about the footy star.

It was commonly believed that Ron Barlow was the first ruck man, but research enough evidence to show that Reynolds was doing it 15 to 20 years before," Dan said.

"There is enough proof to suggest Reynolds was the first, which there is a chapter on in the book.

"I think people with an interest in sports history will really enjoy reading about it."

Reynolds' contributions on and off the field were recognised in 1996 when he was inducted into the AFL Hall of Fame and was elevated to 'Legend' status.

The book already has the tick of approval from Reynolds' family, including his sister Poon who reads the book in their days.

King Richard will be launched locally on Friday August 22 at the Korumburra Middle Hotel from 6pm until 10pm.

Reynolds' 1976 Brownlow Medal will be on display and the special edition will include Reynolds' grandson and former AFL player Joel.

The following day on August 23 a book signing will be held at the Leongatha Library from 10am until midday.

The Brownlow Medal will again be on display. King Richard is available for purchase from the Leongatha Newsagency for $39.95 and all major bookstores.