

## **BARON KELINU VELLA HABER----A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY**

(Also see attached photos)

The origins of the House of Vella are lost in history while the House of Haber and his wife Jahel is mentioned in the Book of Kings, Ch.IV, v.V. The House of Vella Haber therefore originates from the inter-marriage of the House of Vella and the House of Haber. Baron K.Vella Haber, Marquis de Alarò, de Acatlan, was born in Gozo, Malta on October 1<sup>st</sup>., 1913. Son of Lucius C.J. Vella Haber and Anna Buttigieg Grima, he studied at St.Aloysius College and at St. Mark's College for superior studies in Malta. The Coat-of-Arms of the House of Vella Haber carries the motto "In Fide Lucet".

### **CAREER**

- Teacher of the Maltese Language at the Bishop's Seminary and the Lyceum in Gozo (1943-1945)
- Information Officer Malta Civil Service (1945-58)
- Senior Information Officer (1958-73) being Head of the Information and Propaganda Section in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.
- During this period he was also in charge of the bi-monthly agricultural periodical and the weekly broadcast to farmers.
- He retired from the Civil Service in 1973.

### **SOCIAL FIELD**

- Secretary General of the Cigarette Workers Union (1938-43)
- Academic Member of the Academy of the Maltese Language since 1942
- Founder of the Maltese Language Youth Movement and its General Leader (1943-73)
- Founder of several associations for farmers in Gozo (1942)
- Secretary of the Malta Accordion Association during which period he co-sponsored the Coupe Mondial (World Cup) in 1965
- Secretary and later Vice-President of the Gzira Civic Committee (1969-71)
- Promotor of the Langue of Malta of the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem---Knights of Malta since 1963.

### **SOCIAL STATE / FAMILY**

Married to Donna Carmen Camilleri on August 18<sup>th</sup>., 1945. The then world-famous

Oreste Chircop and Paul Axiak, friends of the groom, sang the Ave Marias of Gunoud and of Schubert during the marriage ceremony. The Vella Habers have two daughters and one son. Frances and Joyce were the first two girls ever to obtain a Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) degree in the Maltese Language at the Royal University of Malta. Michael became the first-ever dental surgeon to open a private clinic on the island of Gozo and at the age of 21 was also the youngest-ever student to graduate in dentistry. Presently he is Managing Director of "One Productions", the Malta Labour Party television station. Frances and Joyce are both teachers by profession.

Frances has one son, Efrem, who obtained a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in Management and Economics. He furthered his studies to obtain his Honours on Economics and later read for a Masters Degree in the same field. Presently he is an Economics Officer in the Ministry of Finance.

Joyce has one daughter, Ilona, who holds a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in "Banking and Finance" and Management. She furthered her studies to obtain her Honours in Management and later read for a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (P.G.C.E.). Ilona is a lecturer in Marketing and Quality Management at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology. Michael, brother of Ilona, holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) degree in Accountancy and works as an Auditor with the world-renowned Auditing Firm, Price Waterhouse Coopers.

Dr. Michael has three children. Sarah, who followed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education, teaches Sciences at De La Salle College and for a number of years she has been presenting a weekly television programme called "Grajjet Ghawdex" (Stories from/ The History of Gozo), which programme is produced by her father, Dr. Michael Vella Haber. Miguel, who studied Information Technology, is employed with RS2 Softwear Ltd. where he is Project Manager. He is also IT Manager and Consultant at "One TV". Amy is still following her secondary education.

### **PUBLICATIONS**

Baron K. Vella Haber has published several works of both historical and technical nature amongst which:

- ***"The National Sanctuary of Qala and the Hermit of Mosta"*** (1936)
- ***"The Calender of Flowers"*** which ran through several editions
- ***"The Calender of Gardening"***
- ***"Home-making of Wine"***
- ***"Poultry Breeding"***
- ***"Oratorium for S.S. Peter and Paul"*** which was put to music by renowned Maestro Joseph Sammut and executed by the famed St. Julians Choir at the Basilica of Nadur in Gozo

- *“Folkdrama Naduriana”* a 1100-verse literary work which was honoured with the Gold Sceptre in Italy, obtaining the first prize at this International Competition in Naples.

He also published thousands of articles, profiles and varied contributions in the local press.

### EDITOR OF REVIEWS

K. Vella Haber has been editor of various reviews over the years. Amongst these we mention *“Il-Qawsalla”* of the “Maltese Language Youth Movement”; *“Il-Bidwi”* and *“L-Agricoltura”* for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries”; the *“S.O.S.J. Observer”* of the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

### RADIO

Baron K. Vella Haber started broadcasting way back in 1938. For years on end he broadcast the weekly agricultural programme of the Ministry of Agriculture as well as the literature programme of the Maltese Language Youth Movement. He has broadcast and produced well over 5000 programmes and he has been recognised as the pioneer of the Maltese Radio-drama. He even organised the first-ever training courses in broadcasting and in the writing of radio-plays. He was also the first person to organise competitions in the writing of radio-plays in Malta.

### POEMS

Vella Haber has proven himself to be an established friend of the Muse. He has composed a prolific number of poems mainly in the Maltese Vernacular. He has treated a variety of meters in verse but especially verse in hexameter. He started writing poetry in 1936 when he was still in college. In National Competitions he was awarded

- First Prize in 1937
- Fourth Prize in 1941
- First Prize in 1942
- Honourable Mention in 1944
- Third Prize in 1944.

After this, he started organising poetry competitions himself. In 1977 he was awarded the Gold Laurels in Naples, Italy, and again in 1991, the Gold Sceptre. In 1992 he was honoured with the Christopher Columbus Trophy for his verse in Acireale, Sicily. In August 2007, the Malta Poetry Society appointed Baron K. Vella Haber honorary member of this society for his works in this field. This honour was presented to him by the Minister for Gozo, the Hon. G. Debono.

### **DOCTORATES**

Vella Haber has been awarded several Doctorates in Literature such as those from the U.K. and the USA, a Doctorate in “Herbs and their Uses” by the International University of Colombo in Sri Lanka as well as other Doctorates such as in Philosophy.

### **CHIVALRY**

Marquis Vella Haber has already dedicated thirty years of his life to chivalry and he now holds the office of Grand Prior International and Head of the Supreme Executive Council of the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem, The Hereditary Order. He has received a number of Knighthoods from various International Orders and especially from the Suabian House of Caspis von Schwaben, from His Imperial Highness Prince Montezuma of the Aztec House of which he now holds the title of Prince de San Luis de Acatlan, from His Imperial Highness Prince Tommasini Paternò Sforzini of the House of Constantinople and from the Royal Aragonese House of Paternò Castello Ayerbe Aragona.

### **HONOURS**

Vella Haber has received honours from a variety of Sovereign Houses and amongst them he holds titles of Nobility, Knighthoods, executive offices and even Cousinships. He has also been awarded several medals such as that of the State of Puerto Rico, the Gold Medal of the Academie de Lutece, the Gold Medal by the Academy of Pontzen; medals presented by Mayors in several countries. He has also been Guest of Honour in activities held in countries such as Italy, France, Germany and the United Kingdom. Vella Haber is also a citizen of Assisi in Italy.

## ADDENDA TO HONOURS

March 12<sup>th</sup>., 1995.

Vella Haber became Honorary President of the Luqa Philharmonic Society “L-Unjoni” and on May 20<sup>th</sup>., 1995 the same Philharmonic Society organised a Symphonic Concert at The Catholic Institute of Floriana, Malta, under his Patronage as Honorary President.

June 2<sup>nd</sup>., 1995.

In the halls of the Parliament of the European Community, Baron K.Vella Haber received , in absentia, the singular honour of the “Ordre Communitaire du Merite Europeen” from the hands of President Francois Mitterand, thus becoming the first-ever Maltese Citizen to be honoured by the European Community.....even though Malta itself was not yet a memner of the European Union.

February 19<sup>th</sup>., 1996.

The “Ghaqda Nazzjonali tal-Muzika” (The National Music Society), during its meeting for the Board of Directors, unanimously nominated Baron Vella Haber as Honorary President of the said Society.

March 9<sup>th</sup>., 1996.

In 1995, renowned composer, Prof. Charles Zammit, specially composed “Nostalgia”, a sentimental suite in 7 movements (with a duration of 26 minutes) and dedicated it to Baron Vella Haber. This beautiful musical composition was executed at the General Workers Union Theatre in Valletta during a Symphonic Concert under the patronage of His Excellency the President of The Republic of Malta, the Hon. Dr. Hugo Mifsud Bonnici and Baron Vella Haber.

October 19<sup>th</sup>., 1997

Baron Vella Haber received the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation) medal by the hands of the Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Noel Farrugia, during a special ceremony held at Bahrija agricultural village in Malta.

December 13<sup>th</sup>., 1997.

This date marks Republic Day in Malta. On this occasion Baron Vella Haber was presented with the National Order of Merit by the hands of His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Malta, the Hon. Dr. Ugo Mifsud Bonnici, during an ad hoc ceremony celebrated in the Grandmasters’ Palace in the capital city of Valletta, Malta.

June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

Baron Vella Haber was awarded the title of “Gieh in-Nadur” (In Honour of Nadur City) and became the first citizen to be honoured with this title. Earlier during the ceremony, Baron Vella Haber read out to the festive assembly his specially composed “Cantilena” in Maltese Verse in honour of his late friend, the late Canon Caruana. “Gieh in-Nadur” was presented by the Prime Minister of Malta, the Hon. Dr. Alfred Sant.

May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1999.

His Royal Highness Prince Cesare d’Altavilla (Hauteville, Sicily, Naples) honoured Baron Vella Haber with the noble title of Count of Mandracci, transmittable in perpetuity through his first-born.

January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003.

Baron Vella Haber became the first-ever Maltese personage to be nominated for the Nobel Prize (Vide “International Writers Association IWA---USA Ohio” Publication nr. 3 of March 2003, pp 1, 6 & 7 + SOSJ Observer nr. 102 of April 2003, Malta.)

October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

A special soiree was held at the historic building of St. John and St. James Cavalier in Valletta, Malta, under the patronage of His Excellency the President of Malta, Prof. Guido De Marco. This event was organised to launch a biography written by one of Malta’s most prolific writers, Paul P. Borg. This literary work carries the name of “Kelinu Vella Haber---Hidmietu u l-Moviment tal-Malti”, (K.V.H.---His Work and the Maltese Language Youth Movement). This event received full coverage by One TV., radio stations and the majority of Malta’s printed media as well as in the SOSJ Observer. This biography was, that same year, awarded First Prize at the Malta Literary Awards for Research.

October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

Baron Vella Haber received once more the FAO Award from the hands of the Parliamentary Secretary, the Hon. Dr. Francis Agius at the famous Basilica of Christ the Redeemer in the historic town of L-Isla, Malta. The event started with solemn mass which was concelebrated by His Grace the Arch-Bishop of Malta, Mons. Giuseppe Mercieca. Baron Vella Haber also received a memento of the occasion from the Mayor of the town of L-Isla, Mr. J. Casha. After these celebrations, Baron Vella Haber was interviewed live on a television programme “Kulhadd mill-Pjazza”.

October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

The Gzira Musical Society "Mount Carmel" held a Musical and Vocal Evening at the Sir Temi Zammit Hall of The University of Malta in honour of Baron K. Vella Haber and Maestro Carmelo Borg. The latter had been conducting the orchestra of the Society for a long number of years and was now retired. Baron Vella Haber had served as Secretary and as President of the Gzira Civic Committee during which period he had obtained for the town of Gzira a special coat-of-arms from the Royal House of Paternò, Italy. He had also written the lyrics of the official hymn of Gzira, which hymn was put to music in 2005 by Maestro G. Debono and sung for the very first time during this special event. At the end of the evening Baron Vella Haber was presented with a memento of the occasion. The event was held under the patronage of the Minister of Tourism, the Hon. Dr. Francis Zammit Dimech who had words of praise for both the Maestro and Baron Vella Haber.

August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007.

Baron Vella Haber was appointed Honorary Member of the "Ghaqda Poeti Maltin" (Malta Poetry Society) during a ceremony which was held at the Ministry for Gozo in the city of Victoria, Gozo. The award was presented by the Minister for Gozo, the Hon. Giovanna Debono under whose patronage the Society organised this event. Also present at the ceremony was the Speaker of Parliament, the Hon. Dr. Anton Tabone.

October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007

During the Annual General Meeting of the Mount Carmel Musical Society of the town of Gzira, Malta, Baron K. Vella Haber was unanimously elected Honorary President of this Society.