

MANY knew Harvey Yap as a race car driver. He could have taught you how to drive defensively, gave you your first start in racing, rebuked you if you broke the rules, gave you advice on how to be a better driver, became your mentor and later a friend, or just knew him for what he achieved and what he stood for.

One day we were in a mamak (Indian Muslim restaurant) eating roti when some patrons approached him. He stood up talking to them for some time. After they left, I asked him, "who were they". He told me he had no idea. They had recognised him and wanted to talk to him. This was maybe 10 years ago. He always said to me, he's a "has-been" but I know that he is far from that.

Growing up, I didn't know how famous he was. Or how good a racing driver he was. For me he was just my Papa.

He used to pick me up from school. He was always early. When I came out of school, I could always see him at the bottom of the hill, leaning on his car, waiting for me, waving and smiling.

I will always have memories of him driving me around, sometimes on the streets and on other occasions on the race track and never once did I have any fear no matter how fast he went as he was always in full control of the car.

As a child, I used to hang out at his Harvey Yap School of Advanced Driving in Damansara Utama (Petaling Jaya). I hid under tables and played with the pinball machines while my father

My Papa

BY AMANDA YAP

tutored students on the finer art of driving.

We moved to Johor Bahru when he became the Circuit Manager of the Johor Circuit in Pasir Gudang. I hung out at the Sports Communication office in Komtar (Johor Bahru). And later on, at the track. I learnt to drive for the very first time on that very circuit that many of you had raced on.

During races, I'd hang out in the control tower and sometimes walk around. Everyone needed a pass to gain access to different parts of the circuit especially the pits. My pass read "Harvey Yap's Daughter" and I thought nothing of it.

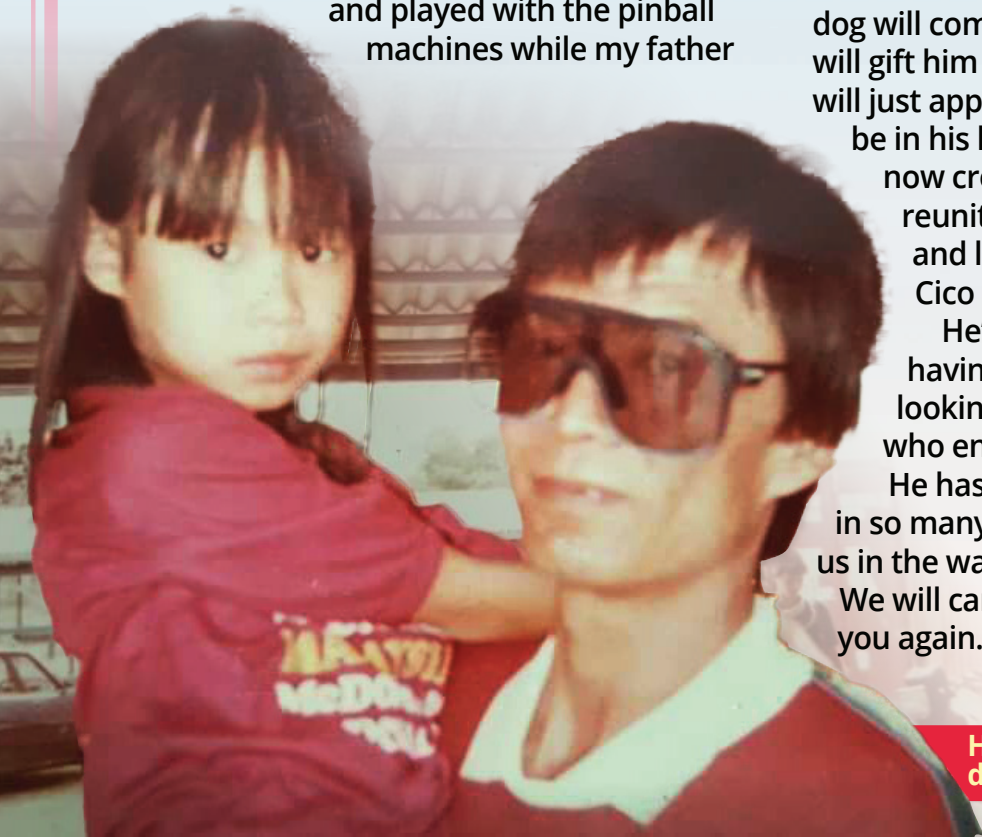
Some of you might remember Johnny. He was big, black and brown and he had free reign of the circuit. Johnny was a stray dog who used to sit by my dad in his office. If you were called into his office, you knew something was not right. Most people would be nervous by the time they started climbing those stairs that led to his office. If my dad didn't intimidate you enough, Johnny would make sure that you would.

Racing was in his blood but he also loved dogs. We always had dogs in our lives. Whenever a dog passed on, somehow, another dog will come into his life. Sometimes someone will gift him with a dog. At other times, a dog will just appear at the front gate, ready to be in his life. I would like to imagine him now crossing the rainbow bridge and be reunited with all the dogs he had loved and loved him back — Johnny, Rebel, Cico and many others.

He'll be up there with them, while having a beer, or two or maybe three, looking down at us. He was a simple man who enjoyed simple things in life.

He has touched each and every one of us in so many different ways. He lives on in all of us in the way we drive and live life.

We will carry you in our hearts. Until we see you again. We love you. Rest in peace Papa.



Harvey with daughter Amanda.