

IN THE NAME OF THE GRANDFATHER

EDWARD CUMMINGS IS FOLLOWING THE ADVICE OFFERED BY HIS LATE GRANDFATHER, BART, ONE OF THE ALL-TIME LEGENDS OF AUSTRALIAN HORSE RACING

WORDS: RAY HICKSON PICTURES: BRADLEY PHOTOGRAPHERS

Everybody knows Bart Cummings didn't give out praise for the sake of it – especially to his family.

So when the racing legend made a point of telling his grandson Edward Cummings he had the makings of a trainer in his own right, they were words not to be taken lightly.

"One of the last conversations I had with Bart was him telling me it was my time to be doing it on my own," Cummings said.

"That was well before Dad and I went into partnership."

Bart passed away in August 2015, so Edward has been playing a long game working his way up to training with five years as foreman for his father Anthony plus 18 months in a training partnership.

The 32-year-old will be his own boss from January 1, Hawkesbury his likely base, and the words of his legendary grandfather are driving his desire to be a success.

"As far as family members go Bart hadn't always been as effusive with positive remarks but he was keen to see me have a go on my own," Cummings said.

"I was very flattered. I derived a lot of confidence from it and started to think very seriously about how far I could take it.

"You always have confidence in yourself to be able to do something but when you get a word like that from someone as accomplished as him, it made me sit back and take note."

Bart "would be laughing", Edward says with some surety, knowing there were three trainers with the Cummings name in Sydney.

"He could have spotted that coming a mile away," he said.



Edward Cummings: "Pressure comes from a lack of preparedness"

Anthony of course retains Leilani Lodge at Randwick while younger brother James, who served four years as foreman then co-trained with Bart Cummings from 2013-2015, is at the helm of the Godolphin empire.

You could easily say Edward has had the right grounding and paid his dues by working behind the scenes, including a stint with Aidan O'Brien,

and stepping up to co-training before making the decision to go it alone.

And he has, but he's also been methodically planning for when the right time to move presented itself for years. It's just in his character.

"It was always going to be difficult for both of us to be training in partnership for 20 or 30 years," Cummings said.



Sky Boy (Christian Reith) records his fourth successive win at Rosehill Gardens

"I felt like I owed Dad that loyalty, he'd been very loyal to me. All good things must come to an end and I felt it was a good time.

"We had the common view that splitting up was the right way to go. He has the belief in me to run my own stable and so do I."

Edward experienced somewhat instant success in his partnership with Anthony through a Group 3 win by Top of My List in the JRA Plate (2000m) in May 2017.

He knows new ventures always come with talk of nerves and pressure and that stables can hit flat spots – the partnership experienced such a period earlier this year but has recently produced some emerging talents including Sky Boy and Baller.

As a racehorse trainer in the toughest arena in Australia, up against the likes of the Chris Waller juggernaut and the global powerhouse Godolphin guided by his brother, Cummings has every reason to feel a little apprehensive.

But not for those reasons.

"I'm nervous because I want to do well, not because I don't think I can do the job," he said.

"You want to make sure the people have confidence in you and what you're doing."

"It's a confidence game, if you're walking into the races doubting yourself or whether you've made the right decision, you know straight away perhaps there was a better way.

"Pressure comes from a lack of preparedness and that's another reason why making the announcement when I did gave me a solid three months to organise myself.

"To understand exactly what it is I want to provide as a trainer to my client base, the kind of opportunity I can provide and make the experience in horse ownership a positive one."

Chris Waller trained just four winners in his first year training in Sydney.

And given the deliberate way Cummings has gone about

establishing himself, quietly buying yearlings and rallying owners, he'd find that number a disappointment in the first 12 months.

Being a Cummings is a healthy head start but that's all it guarantees.

It's no surprise that he has a passion for training stayers – you couldn't be a Cummings and not – and he strives to join brother James as a fourth generation Group 1-winning trainer.

There would have been few fledging trainers as prepared for day one on the job but he's well aware it's not all going to happen overnight.

"I think it is going to be a very slow burn in the first 12 to 24 months," Cummings said.

"I'd be hopeful within a few years I'd have a solid 30-40 horse stable with lots of happy customers. "People who have had a good experience and confident their horses can reach their potential under my care.

"I'd like to have a strong standard of work ethic in the stable, good people working for me and I'd like to think within that time I can win a nice race." **RNSW**