
Tributes paid to York campus stalwart Roger McMeeking

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By Kate Liptrot

TRIBUTES have been paid to the former bursar of the [University of York](#) who tirelessly dedicated much of his time to helping to improve the city.

Roger McMeeking, of [Heworth Green](#), was well known as an integral part of the establishment in York and has been recognised as “a critical figure in the university’s success”.

Mr McMeeking volunteered on numerous boards including the York Archaeological Trust, York Civic Trust, the National Centre for Early Music, the York Millennium Bridge Trust and Yorkshire Film Archive.

He was also known for his work as chairman of [City of York Council](#)’s standards committee, acting as a watchdog to monitor the conduct of elected councillors, as the first chairman of the science park and co-founder of the York Film Theatre, which eventually developed into the City Screen.

Grandfather-of-three Mr McMeeking died at [York Hospital](#) late last month at the age of 76.

His widow Ileana and children Antonia and Andrew said: “We have been overwhelmed and touched by many wonderful letters and cards speaking of Dad’s vision, dedication and commitment, not only to the university but also to the city.”

Mr McMeeking was educated at Uppingham School and Magdalen College, Oxford, before beginning his career at the Institute of Physics in London.

In June 1964 he moved to York with Ileana and two small children, enthusiastic to begin work at the brand new and innovative University of York.

He was bursar of the university for many years until his retirement in 1997.

A colleague said: “Roger was amazing as bursar. He oversaw all building development and maintenance of all the buildings, together with all the services to support both the students and the academics and their research and teaching.

“His extraordinary quality was that he cared deeply about community, the life of the colleges and the welfare of the students. As a result, he was a critical figure in the University’s success and its development until he retired in 1997. He enjoyed excellent relationships with staff and students and sustained contact with many of them after they left. He masterminded many of the new building developments in the years leading up to his retirement. He always shouldered his heavy responsibilities with total commitment, enthusiasm and intellect.”

Della Tomlin, director of the National Centre for Early Music, said: “Roger was a lovely, kind, generous man who has worked throughout his life to help preserve the city of York, to encourage talent and to support innovation. A stickler for getting things right, always the one to read every last word in the agenda papers, he could be totally relied upon to have a thorough knowledge of the subject in hand and having him on your side in any discussion was bliss - he would never let you make a mistake, or let you forget something which would later prove to be the ‘vital’ clue in any project – particularly when it came to building projects – he was in fact the perfect trustee.

“Roger retired from the NCEM board a few years ago. but remained an avid supporter attending jazz and contemporary music concerts at the NCEM, always keen to know how we were getting on, and to hear of any problems he might help us with – he was a true friend and we will miss him dreadfully.”

A spokesman for the University of York said: “It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of Roger. He was a loyal servant to the University for more than three decades and played a key role in preparing the University to meet the challenges of the 21st century.”

Mr McMeeking’s funeral will be held at the Unitarian Chapel, St Saviourgate, at 1pm tomorrow.

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