

Roy Emerson FCIEH

A Tribute



Chartered
Institute of
Environmental
Health



Because You Have Lived.

To laugh often and much.

To win the respect of intelligent people, and
the affection of children.

To earn the appreciation of honest critics.

To appreciate beauty.

To find the best in others.

To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy
child, or a garden patch.

To know even one life has breathed easier because
you have lived.

This is to have succeeded.

An Appreciation of Roy

“We are dwarfs astride the shoulders of giants. We master their wisdom and move beyond it. Due to their wisdom we grow wise and are able to say all that we say, but not because we are greater than they.”

Roy was a giant in the Environmental Health profession, locally here in the North East, nationally and worldwide.

Roy is rightly known as a great family man and I know he will be missed by his close family. He always considered himself as part of a far wider Environmental Health family, recalling many times how throughout all his travels he never met an unfriendly EHO.

I met Roy early in my career in the mid 70s at a Tyneside branch meeting of what was then known as the “Association.” Like most of the newly qualified EHOs I was deeply impressed by the sincerity, enthusiasm, knowledge and consummate professionalism he showed.

It wasn't until a few years later when I was first on CIEH Council that I came to know Roy well. Throughout that time he has continued to grow in my estimation for his continued passion for public and environmental health, particularly internationally through the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) of which he was instrumental in creating.

Roy always had a marvelous ability to communicate and empathise, whether with individuals, small groups or huge audiences. He said one of his proudest moments was to speak at the inaugural IFEH conference at Sydney in 1988. I didn't hear that speech but whenever I did hear him, his sincerity was so clear, no more so than when I listened to him speak on the need for preventative measures to reduce the burden caused by cancer and it was with great dignity that he struggled to keep a firm voice and hold back tears when talking of the serious illness that was then affecting his granddaughter.

It was only very recently that I learned some new things about him when he kindly helped with a Biography on past presidents of IFEH. He told me that his first job on behalf of the then Sanitary Inspectors Association, was at Berwick, when his Chief asked him to organise a meeting between the Northern Centre and the colleagues north of the border.

I also learned that the reason he was still able to wear his dress suit was because he kept so fit, ever since the days in the RAF when he was a very proficient athlete, winning a mile race at White City in 1947, recording a most impressive time of 4 minutes 12 seconds.

It was a great privilege for me to be with him at the IFEH Council meeting at the Bagamoyo Conference in Tanzania, when we took the first tentative steps in the twinning of the Kenyan Association and the then Northern Centre. I know that visit to Tanzania made

Roy an enthusiastic supporter of Water for Kids and he was proud to be their Vice President.

Although in recent years Roy and Dorothy weren't able to attend IFEH events their absence was always noticed by all those who used to look forward to seeing their cheerful faces. They would still expect to be kept up to date and it was a pleasure visiting them, particularly with guests from Kenya here through the Commonwealth Fellowship Scheme.

Local meetings were never a problem and so it was good to see them at the recent Water for Kids AGM in Manchester. Roy was also an active participant at the recent CIEH North East Regional meeting at Northumbria University, where he addressed the students with his usual infectious enthusiasm as well as making sure he diligently marked each of the case studies on display.

If ever there was a role model on how to "Live the Dream" Roy was it.

I will miss his kind words and wise counsel and I know many others will share that view.

He truly was a "Friend of the Human Race"

Les Milne