

## DEREK ANDREW OGG- AN OBITUARY

Derek Ogg, QC passed away suddenly and unexpectedly at his home on 1 May 2020 and on that date a rich, diverse and meaningful life was cut short far too soon.

Not long after calling at the Bar Derek was being instructed as a Junior Counsel to conduct murder trials for the defence, a situation which was unheard of at that time. His huge presence and ability in court which belied his relative inexperience meant that, like all great pleaders, when he spoke others listened.

Being a trailblazer was nothing new for Derek. As a forceful campaigner for gay rights during his student days at Edinburgh University he had bravely spoken out for those marginalised within society whose voices at that time were rarely heard. With an interest in global events he had the foresight to co-found Scottish Aids Monitor before a single case of HIV was diagnosed in Scotland, after reading about this new virus which was developing within the gay communities of New York.

Derek had a self-assurance and confidence which was backed by his intellect. He had an incredibly sharp mind and a photographic memory. Along with these traits however he retained the ability to laugh at himself. He would tell the story of a High Court trial in Edinburgh during which he cross-examined an elderly crown witness about a painting which could be seen in a photograph of the locus. On receiving confirmation by the witness of the artist Derek stated "Ah yes, I own one of his paintings myself," to which a juror could be heard to comment, not quite sotto voce, "you would...."

Moving to the slightly less refined arena of Glasgow High Court he soon became as sought after for instruction as he had been in Edinburgh. Having looked to America to find ways of improving his craft, Derek undertook the Diploma in Master Advocacy through their National Institute for Trial Advocacy, a step which took his work to a higher level. It also introduced NITA to Scottish lawyers.

After a period in Crown Office where he was appointed Head of the newly formed National Sexual Crimes Unit he returned to defence. He became a friend of the Glasgow Bar Association and when asked to speak at Seminars he gave his time willingly and used his vast experience to assist us to become better lawyers. During trials he would involve his Juniors and instructing solicitors, sometimes setting homework to be discussed the next morning before court over a cup of coffee. He spoke of the need for passion to do our job well and that once the passion goes you have to stop. One of the great sadnesses in his passing is that his passion remained.

Derek loved to talk about the law and any number of other subjects about which he had an expertise and an opinion. He was a true Renaissance man. Typically, at the beginning of the recent lockdown he invited contact for help with any aspect of law in order to keep his brain sharp.

It is impossible to encapsulate in a few paragraphs the contribution that Derek made to the criminal courts and wider society. His fearlessness in the face of a challenge will be greatly missed and however our courts return after the coronavirus pandemic they will be diminished by his absence.

Ann Ritchie

May 2020