

Christopher Todd RIP

Tribute/Eulogy: Hugh Todd (Brother)

Delivered: Liverpool Anglican Cathedral on 7th September 2018

Thank you each and every one for being here today. I know Christopher would be amazed and very touched. As his family we are all humbled by the presence of so many of his good friends and colleagues. Both past and present.

Before I talk of Christopher I want to take this opportunity to express the families appreciation of everything people have done since Christopher fell ill, the countless numbers who visited, those who came to the house, those who sent cards or emails, those who telephoned, those who saw Christopher in Arrowe Park, those who visited at Westhaven, those who travelled the miles there and back in one day from Pickering, Stoke, Andover and Edinburgh, and of course I don't forget those who understandably preferred to remember the old Christopher and simply immersed themselves in their fondest memories.

Please never think you could or should have done more, you know often the smallest gesture makes the greatest difference, so no matter how insignificant you may think was the part you played believe me your contributions were immense, or as Christopher may have said excellent indeed.

To the medical staff at Wythenshawe, the Walton and Arrowe Park we have already said our thank yous, their skill patience and devotion amazed us daily, ordinary people performing extraordinary tasks.

Westhaven was the right choice, Christopher was comfortable and content, we hold the staff – from top to bottom – in the highest regard, dedicated beyond belief and providing care, often in difficult circumstances, with dignity and compassion but always with a smile.

I must mention his two most recent favourite restaurants The Quadrant and Peel Hey guest house (rumour has it food was important to Christopher) their generosity was amazing and they both went the extra mile by providing him in his last weeks with their individual specialities of Sea Bass and Lemon Meringue pie. Christopher had prepared his own tribute; forward planning was never a weakness. It stretched to 8 pages. He was nothing if not thorough, but don't worry his younger brother has tribute part 2, the shortened version, in the hope we can all make it home today.

In all he took on Christopher lived life with a passion, his enthusiasm was infectious, his determination rock solid, his spirit unconquerable, his team talks I'm sure inspiring and unmissable, and I'm convinced he had a mission to convert the whole universe to either chemistry teachers or hockey players.

Christopher, Chris, Sir or Toddy or Bigman or legend, or even Uncle Chrissy – was born in Leicester but moved to Liverpool 2 years later, as our father took up appointment as Consultant Paediatrician. Educated at Liverpool College, Christopher subsequently spent 6 years in industry before reading chemistry at Loughborough University, graduating with honours in 1974. Then a PGCE at St Kathrine's College, now Liverpool Hope University.

In Sept 1975 he was appointed to teach chemistry at CCGS, he must have liked it as he stayed for a total of 31 years, retiring from his academic career in July 2006, but continuing to organise school hockey. In June 2016 he celebrated an amazing 41 years in charge, having coached the first team to 6 national u18 finals, winning 3 out of the 6, still as far as I know a national record for one person. Christopher was proud of what his students achieved and continued to follow their careers very closely and with immense satisfaction.

Christopher played hockey himself of course, but after a major kidney operation in 1967 he turned first to

umpiring and later to umpire coaching. His record is staggering and the landmarks are legion, I share with you only a sample:

1. He umpired his first international in March 1974 becoming at that time the youngest ever international hockey umpire.
2. He was appointed to umpire a total of 110 internationals including 6 world cups (a British record) 3 European nations championships (certainly up to 2016 I understand a world record)
3. He umpired at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics where he officiated at his 100th international receiving the FIH golden whistle. Also appointed to the Moscow Olympics he chose not to go supporting the decision of the governing body. Consequently, the FIH decided not to select him for the 84 and 88 Olympics; his loyalty deserves better.
4. In April 1991 became part of special hockey history when he umpired the last ever match involving East Germany before they merged with the West.

Retiring from international hockey umpiring in June 1995, he later qualified as a level 3 umpire coach, the highest coach award in England, and in 2006 was given a special long service award by Wirral B C for outstanding service to hockey on Merseyside. On 26th March 2013 he was elected as the New England hockey national Vice President, possibly his most satisfying achievement, and earlier this year started an unprecedented 6th year in that roll.

Christopher loved his classical music. In 1980 while at CCGS he was given permission to begin a school orchestra. He enrolled on a conductor's course and within 5 years had 50 musicians giving 6 concerts each academic year. He conducted the orchestra for a total of 22 years – twice on radio Merseyside – during that time raising substantial funds for children's charities.

His second home was the Phil, the concerts brought him immense pleasure, and he was a regular member of the audience for more than 40 years, enjoying the special company of his good friends Alan and Di who even during his illness took him to one last Thursday evening concert, a gesture I know gave Christopher so much joy and for that and so much more the family cannot thank them enough.

Christopher's army connection reaches back over 55 years, he served in the Liverpool College CCF, joined the Liverpool Scottish TA in 1965 and was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in 1966. He later took over as OIC of Liverpool Scottish cadets reaching the rank of Captain. His commission was transferred to CCGS and he eventually became contingent commander with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. When he retired from teaching he was placed on the reserve list after a remarkable 40 years of commissioned service. Over time his love of Hackney and the army came together and until recently he was a key figure in the joint services hockey tournament, a fixture held regularly at Aldershot and Portsmouth. Christopher always considered himself both fortunate and privileged to have counted so many service personnel among his dearest and finest friends.

Christopher was devoutly religious. He was a practising Christian and his faith was unshakable. He worshipped virtually all his life at the parish church of St Mary Wavertree, for many years we lived opposite. Christopher gave himself tirelessly to church life including, like myself, singing in the choir – sorry Christopher I really do think I had the better voice – and like our father taking on the role of lay reader. Earlier this year he reached a landmark, having been a worshipper at St Mary's for an unwavering 70years.

In recent times he formed a special attachment with the cathedral. He was placed on the list of lay persons who read the lessons and take the intercessions. He came to worship regularly here with his dear friends John and Elsie who like Alan and Di knew our parents and have been treasured family friends for so many years.

Above all else however, one passion was more precious than any other – the joy of family. On his

mantelpiece, there as long as I can remember, sits a plaque which reads "Family where life begins and love never ends."

He was big bro to Rosi and me, brother-in-law to Val, pretend son-in-law to Val's mum, and of course Uncle Chrissy to Laura and Stephanie; "my darling nieces" as he would say.

He was loving without condition generous without limit, and certainly that love and generosity he showed them over the years. Laura and Stephanie have returned to him unselfishly over these last few weeks. In a private moment lying in his hospital bed he called me close and, in a voice breaking with emotion, insisted I make sure people would know how much he cared for them; as if anyone who knew him would ever think otherwise.

From a touching email sent to us for Christopher from Robert (Caldy, student 81-86) recounting happy hockey days, I share with you a simple line which for me says everything. "Don't be in any doubt of the difference you made to my life, and so many others".

I'm sure we all have our own personal memories of Christopher, a first meeting, the last time you saw him, maybe just one seemingly innocent moment somewhere which now you will come to treasure as even more special. I remember people used to say of our father he was not only a gentleman but also a gentle man. So, like father like son. For me that will always be Christopher.