

A tribute to Stephen Sayer by his brother Richard

Stephen Sayer died on 14 March 2018 aged 72. At the age of 52 he was diagnosed with prostate cancer and given 5 years to live. By fortitude, optimism, faith and a refusal to give in, he lived on for 20 years. He leaves a son and a daughter and his devoted wife of 30 years Aileen. On leaving Framlingham College he took articles with Richards Butler, a well-known firm of city solicitors later to become part of Reed Smith, qualifying in 1969, a partner for 31 years, and a sought-after legal adviser on national and international commercial matters. In 2004 he and Aileen moved to Muscat in Oman where he opened Richards Butler's office, continuing to play a significant role in the British and the Anglican Church communities there after his retirement in 2014. Stephen and Aileen returned to live in London in 2016 so that he could undergo a course of chemotherapy which was ultimately unsuccessful.

He excelled at sport: at Framlingham at the age of 14 he was already in the College squash, cricket and tennis teams, playing in each for four years and captaining them all, whilst also spending two years in the hockey XI. He played four years in the Public Schools Tennis at Wimbledon, was runner-up at the age of 14 in the Public Schools under 16 squash tournament (beaten by the son of the famous Hashim Khan), and in his last year captained the Public Schools squash team. Surprisingly to some he was also a Company Sergeant Major in the school's CCF.

After Fram he played 1st XI cricket and tennis for Woodford Wells and hockey for Crostyx alongside fellow OFs, Humphrey Truman, Robin Anderton, his brother Richard, and Martin Lamb. Stephen played County championship hockey for Essex, forming a formidable full-back partnership with Robin Anderton, and occasional squash for Essex. In later years he played real tennis, at Hatfield House and Queen's and as a member of the Jesters Club. Like all real tennis enthusiasts he was a wine buff and generously insisted on the many visitors to their London home depleting his UK wine cellar. He could play any sport with ease, croquet, table tennis, bowls, rackets, even golf, although he did say he found putting on the greens at Augusta a bit tricky.

His refusal to give anything less than his best showed itself in all aspects of his life: he taught and mentored a number of UK and foreign law students, wrote articles on correct English usage, authored a leading legal textbook on international commercial contract negotiation. He was a Freeman of the City, a liveryman of the City of London Solicitors Company and a well known figure at the Reform Club. He possessed great energy, which fed his appetite for everything: for books, for debate, for history, archaeology, art, music, politics, but most of all, for people.

He touched the lives of many people and will be missed by a wide number of friends across the globe, who will remember a faithful friend, with a strong sense of humour and an interest in people of all shapes, sizes and backgrounds.

A Thanksgiving Service will take place at Southwark Cathedral at 1430 on June 5th.