

David Keith Wilson

Mr Chancellor,

In any large organisation, it is often the case that the most crucial work is carried out largely *incognito*, through the resourcefulness and endurance of individuals whose very existence is unknown to the majority of the people whom they faithfully serve. It is difficult to praise highly enough the sustained efforts of those people who fulfil such roles, particularly when their work is unpaid, and especially when the day-job from which that work absents them is self-employment. David Wilson FCA is an outstanding example of this *genre*. As Honorary Treasurer of this University from 1993 to 2004, he fulfilled the daunting mission of ensuring the solvency of our institution. Working in close partnership with the Bursar, he was in many ways the University's financial ambassador to the wider world. In this role he excelled, not only because of his eminence in financial circles, but also due to his unerring ability to persuade others to align to his views, usually without them even noticing the process of persuasion!

'Brilliant', 'persuasive', 'forceful' and 'gentle' are three adjectives that come readily to the lips of colleagues, as they describe innumerable instances in which David managed to penetrate rapidly to the heart of extremely complex

issues which had left others scratching their heads. Given these abilities, it is no surprise that David's counsel was often sought by the Principal Officers of the University on issues that fell far beyond the scope of his formal responsibilities, either as Honorary Treasurer, in his earlier role as Chairman on the University Audit Committee or during his many years as a Lay Member of Council.

So extensive was David's work on behalf of the University that it is difficult to understand how he also managed to sustain his highly successful career as a Chartered Accountant. From the day he left his native Surbiton at the tender age of 18, to join Peat Marwick Mitchell and Company in the City of London, David's progression was mercurial. After 16 years in London, David took up a Partner position in Newcastle in 1978, where he managed to double the turnover of the branch, before moving on to repeat the feat in Leeds. Since 1990, in the few interstices which his services to the University left in his diary, David has run his own highly-successful accountancy practice here in Newcastle, specialising in the provision of financial expert witness services to many local law firms. He is a former President of the Northern Society of Chartered Accountants, and has previously served as a Director of Northern Rock plc, Ascham House School, Newcastle Mental Health Trust and the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine, and is currently a non-executive director of St Cuthbert Newcastle Estates Limited.

Notwithstanding the appetite of the University and his business clients for David's time and energy, he has always made a priority of family life. Together with his wife Libby, whose time was also at a premium due to her medical career, they raised three children, all of whom are now successfully pursuing professional careers, two of them in their father's footsteps in the financial sector.

David discards stress and finds peace on the banks of the River Coquet and the North Tyne, fishing rod in hand. When time permits, his passion for fishing and hunting also takes him further afield, to the beauties of Libby's native Scotland, and most recently to the wilds of British Columbia. Lest David should ever doubt that a warm welcome remains for him here at the University of Newcastle, where his counsel remains a highly-prized commodity, I ask you now, Mr Chancellor, to bestow upon David Wilson an Honorary Fellowship.

Citation by Professor Paul Younger