

Keith Beddall Obituary

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Keith Beddall, former Chairman & Vice-Chairman, passed away on the evening of Monday 11th June. Our thoughts and condolences go to his wife Jean, a previous Hon. General Secretary of the League, and to their son David, a current committee member. The funeral was held on Monday 2nd July at Kempston East Methodist and a very appropriate obituary can be found by clicking on this article's title.

"Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can."

Keith Beddall touched and influenced many lives in many ways. He was generous, hardworking, principled and disciplined. A great advocate of youth, he recognised the influence they would have in the world, and nurtured their potential. Demonstrating faith in young people, he gave everyone a chance, believing in, and to paraphrase the Frankie Lane song, often being, the someone who showed the way to a young person who had gone astray. He wanted to serve and help others in their lives.

Keith was born in Kempston in 1932, the youngest of 2 children with an older Sister, Mary. He was educated locally and attended Bedford Road School. Leaving school aged 14 he took up an apprenticeship as a Painter and Decorator. Later in life Keith thought his son, David, was following in his footsteps when he volunteered to touch up the paintwork on the exterior of their house. He bought all the paint and left David to it, only to find when he got home that David had decided he wasn't brave enough to go up the ladder to paint the top windows, so he ended up having to do the job anyway!

Entering National Service in 1950, Keith was based at RAF Halton as a nurse in the hospital. He continued his involvement with the health service afterwards and was awarded his "25 years service" badge as a blood donor, a commitment he undertook willingly and conscientiously.

Keith eventually met Jean and they married in the rain on Boxing Day 1955. Their first and only son, David, arrived 6 years later.

His faith journey started at an early age when he attended the Sunday School at Kempston East. He would go on to become a Sunday School teacher and leader, and for many years led the Youth Club here at church where he had a positive influence on many young lives. He encouraged the members to actively participate in the events of the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs, arranging for them to attend sporting fixtures and the annual weekends held in London. As if he wasn't active enough he encouraged and managed a young gospel group, "The Followers," at Kempston East around this time, and managed the Kempston United football team in the local league.

Keith loved his sport whether as a player, coach or spectator with trips to see some of the world's best sportsmen at Wembley, Lords, Twickenham, and of course "White Hart Lane," the home of his beloved "Spurs."

Table Tennis was always one of Keith's main interests. He played for many years locally and coached various young players. Many have learnt to play the game under his tutelage and developed into league and sometimes county players. Not surprisingly, he introduced his son, David, to the sport taking on multiple roles as father, coach and number one fan!

Keith was also heavily involved in Table Tennis Administration. He was a former Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Bedford & District Table Tennis League, Bedfordshire County Representative, Tournament Secretary and also qualified as a County Umpire subsequently officiating at the World Championships in 1977.

Employment wise, Keith moved into the Insurance industry where he spent the rest of his working life with Pearl

Assurance. He and Jean would often visit Bedford where he would spend most of the time saying hello to all the happy customers he would bump into. Two of these customers, who lived next door to each other, were called Mr Button and the other Mr Hole!

Keith loved driving and after he retired he once again looked for a way of helping others. This he found in his work with the Bedford Daycare Hospice where he used to collect patients from their homes and take them to the hospice for the day. He benefited from this service himself as his illness took hold and his mobility was compromised, enjoying a day there himself once a week.

Keith was also active and enjoyed his membership of PROBUS in Kempston, once again meeting many new friends.

Keith held a deep faith and experienced a long and rich spiritual journey.

He died as he lived – peacefully.

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