

Johnny Leach MBE funeral arrangements

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Posted On: June 11, 2014



Johnny Leach's funeral will take place on Wednesday 18th June 2014 at 12 noon at The Church of St Peter and St Paul, Mill Road, Kedington, Suffolk CB9 7NN.

Family flowers only but donations can be made, cheques payable to the 'Stroke Association' via HJ Paintin Ltd, Funeral Directors, 43 High Street, Linton, Cambridge CB21 4HS Tel: 01223 891226.

Tributes

It's very sad news. A fantastic ambassador for our sport, a great peace maker, a kindly man who always had time for anyone. We will not see his like again.

Condolences to the Leach family.

Doreen Stannard

(President, Table Tennis England)

I was very sorry to learn of the death of Johnny Leach, twice men's singles world champion. A wonderful figurehead for English table tennis, and an entrepreneur and businessman with great media savviness, Johnny did a huge amount to promote table tennis nationally and internationally. In the 1950's, a major English/British sports personality who everyone knew of.

A real 'gentleman', he also had rare rounded balance and diplomatic skills, which he could put to good effect such as when chairing (as president) difficult ETTA AGMs. I don't claim to have known him well but he always remembered me as Ken, as if I was close. Despite his magnificent playing achievements, Johnny maintained a sense of humility and rationality. He modestly told me that 'we were not as good as the present internationals', which is true with all the modern equipment, training methods and sports science, but you can only be the best of your time, which Johnny certainly was.

We currently miss such major figures representing and promoting behind our sport. So farewell Johnny, a truly great English table tennis player and supporter.

Ken Muhr

On behalf of the Irish table tennis, let me convey our sincere regrets at the passing of Johnny Leach. During the course of today, I have spoken to our Life President, Joe Veselsky and our own playing legend, Tommy Caffrey. Each of them spoke in glowing terms about Johnny. As Joe said in his tribute, we will not see his like again. May he rest in peace.

Joseph A Hickey

(President, Table Tennis Ireland)

I am very upset on hearing the news. Johnny was a very close friend for the past 40 years. He played lots of table tennis in the North of Ireland and he will be very sorely missed by all in Irish Table Tennis. Johnny has probably already resumed his doubles partnership with Victor Barna and no one will beat them. We will not see his like again

Joe Veselsky

(Irish Life President)

I want to express our (ITTA) deepest sympathy to your association on the death of your highly esteemed former President and player. We stood in memory of Johnny at our Annual General Meeting in Dublin last Saturday.

While all of us are aware of Johnny's very successful career both on and off the table, very few have witnessed him play although he did spend some time in Northern Ireland during the war years. Some of our older brigade at our AGM recalled Johnny's win in the Irish Open in 1948. Please accept our sympathy as we note the passing of such an important figure in our sport.

Kenneth Strong

(ITTA International Director/Company Secretary)

I am very sad to hear the news of Johnny's passing. I remember when Johnny asked Graham Sandley and myself to feature in a book about table tennis when we were very young. We travelled to meet him at Crystal Palace National Sports Centre, it was my first introduction to the world of media. He was such a giant of the game and so kind of him to support us.

He was a lovely modest man and gave Graham and I a wonderful start in our junior careers with a equipment sponsorship deal with Halex and plenty of sound advice on how to reach the top. I will always remember that day and be thankful for the start he gave me all those years ago, a true legend of our sport.

Alison Broe

THANK YOU from the bottom of my heart for everything table tennis.
Rest in peace Johnny

Dot MacFarlane

I first met Johnny Leach when, in 1954 as a nervous 15-year-old, I played in my first senior international match. Johnny was by then a double world champion and a household name at a time when table tennis attracted audiences of thousands and was the biggest competitive sport in the country. Johnny had been my boyhood idol yet he immediately put me at ease and helped me through the evening with that relaxed charm of his.

After that I played against him; alongside him in Swaythling cup matches; served under him when he was England's non playing captain and worked for him as a coach on his Holiday camp scheme.

Johnny was an old fashioned gentleman, helpful, kind and courteous. He was always in complete control of events and totally unflappable. Yet this urbane exterior concealed the fierce determination and will to win needed to win two world championships.

I have wonderful memories of times spent with Johnny both on and off the table tennis table.

Johnny Leach world champion and gentleman I salute you!

Ian Harrison

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