



Obituary: Martin Kinsella

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A Tribute to Martin Kinsella MBE, 1957-2016

The recent passing of Martin Kinsella will leave a gaping hole in the many lives he touched through his charitable enterprise and the sporting circles he graced. Martin passed away peacefully following a hard fought battle with cancer on Sunday 21st August, surrounded by his partner Karen and his three children, Rebecca, Callum and Georgina.

Martin was of Irish descent and born in Mansfield where he was introduced to table tennis at senior school. As a teenager, he struck up a close and lasting friendship with Colin and Sandra Deaton who ran a sports entertainment business in North East Derbyshire.

"World of Sport" provided sports entertainers for holiday camps such as Butlin's and Warner's, and it was Martin who eventually starred in the table tennis exhibitions, thrilling the crowds with his skills and tricks.

Deaton also provided demonstrations and entertainment in the primary and junior schools of the Chesterfield area. It was while Martin was taking on all-comers with a frying-pan at Holmgate School in Clay Cross, he was spotted by a very young Alan Cooke who was in awe of Martin's skills and he decided to take up the sport.

Using Martin as inspiration, "Cookie" went on to become a six-time English national singles champion and the 2006 World Veteran champion.

Martin's adventures in the table tennis entertainment spotlight continued when in 1977 he featured in a series of events alongside the inimitable Chester Barnes. The series climaxed when he played Chester's straight-man on the stage of the Crucible theatre in Sheffield, which Colin Deaton staged and I compered with the help of Bernie Clifton before an audience of 900 paying customers!

Following the success at the Crucible, Deaton piped the icing onto Martin's cake with a contract to entertain on the QE2 world cruise with Albion's Dale Ajeto. Not surprisingly the pair attracted huge crowds with their unique

brand of table tennis entertainment and comedy.

In the late 1970s Martin competed in the Super Division of the Sheffield league for Wadsley Bridge alongside Steve Mills and for Saint Albion with David Rayner. In 1978 Martin won the Sheffield under-21 singles title and reached the semi-finals of the men's singles, losing out to Trevor Williams – the eventual champion.

Martin played in the German Oberliga in 1980 for Hoetha Berlin and his friends Ivor Warner and Dave Constance became his rivals as they registered with other German clubs. He became Irish national champion and played in the European Championships team event for his country in Berne, Switzerland in 1980.

In 2002 Martin took responsibility for managing the "Good Shepherd Trust", a homeless hostel in the centre of Wolverhampton. Convinced that there was a better way and that clients in the service deserved more, Martin set about forming P3 and the unique ethos of changing lives, that everyone in the organisation now undertakes every day.

Martin developed P3 into one of the UK's leading charities and he was awarded the MBE for his services to charity. Martin had the ability to communicate and interact at all levels, which he demonstrated during trips to Downing Street where he met with Tony Blair and Gordon Brown.

Mark Simms, the current CEO of P3 said: "Martin had few equals in his energy, drive and capacity for challenging social injustice; his commitment to social reform in all his endeavours; his courage and entrepreneurial appetite for risk; his brilliant and intuitive commercial judgment; his humanity and generosity of spirit; the ferocious loyalty and friendship he gave and drew from those around him; his charm and waspish humour.

"From this small yet challenging beginning, these values – that everyone in society deserved the chance to reach their potential – have never changed as P3 has grown to become a national, award-winning charity, with over 600 staff, working with thousands of individuals on a daily basis.

"Under Martin's stewardship we (P3) grew from supporting homeless people in a single city in the Midlands to helping people all over England with a wide variety of needs. The Charity has won many national, regional and local awards and accolades; but most importantly we hear stories from clients on a daily basis who have had their lives turned around."

Martin will be sorely missed by his family, friends and colleagues past and present around the UK, on whose lives he left an indelible and meaningful handprint.

Martin's funeral will take place at 12pm on Tuesday 6th September at the All Saints Church, Higg Lane, Alderwasley, Derbyshire DE56 2SR
and afterwards at the Bear Inn – Wirksworth Road, Alderwasley, Belper DE56 2RD.

- With special thanks to Mark Simms, Sandra Deaton, Alan Cooke, Dale Ajeto and Ivor Warner, without whose input this tribute would not have been possible.

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