



Mr. David P. MacDonald 1931 – 2019

Staff Member 1969 – 1992

On Friday 18th October 2019, David (or Dave as he was affectionately known as to friends and family) passed away peacefully at Ninewells Hospital in Dundee, aged 89.

At the close of session 1991/92, David retired from the High School of Dundee after 23 years of loyal and active service - 18 of these years as Head Master of Art and Design. Benefitting from the fine all-round education of Morgan Academy in the 1940s, David proceeded to Dundee College of Art to study his Diploma in Art & Design.

The quality and happiness from his own education influenced him to pursue a career in teaching himself and so he went on to take the appropriate qualification at Dundee Training College. Following his National Service with the Royal Army Education Corps, he held appointments at Linlathen High School, Kirkton High School and Harris Academy before joining the Art Department of the High School of Dundee in January 1969.

A successful artist and designer as well as an experienced teacher, David brought to his department, and indeed the entire school, his own varied talents, wide interests and lively sense of humour. He succeeded Mr. W. P. Vannet as Head Master of Art and Design in 1975. His friendly and approachable manner encouraged pupils at all stages, from the Junior School through to his specialist S.C.E candidates, to enjoy art for its own sake. From this basic policy of "art for all", the specialists flourished to produce excellent results in the SCE exams at Ordinary and Higher Grade, and of course there were also those who proceeded to study at Art College and who won recognition as artists of distinction.

As the work of professional artists and designers came to be more fully explored, a wider range of media and greater variety of techniques were added to the more traditional programmes of drawing and painting. In his last academic session before retiring, David led the Art and Design Department to prepare pupils for the new-style Standard Grade course in Art & Design.

Outwith his Department, David made a very considerable contribution to the wider life of the School. In his youth he was a committed and successful athlete of field and track and a skilful and competitive hockey player at District level meaning he was very willing to give his spare time and talent to support our school's sports programme. For over 20 years, he continued to give the hockey teams outstanding guidance as their coach and umpire and not just during the weekly Games periods but in all weather conditions and over Saturday morning training and matches too.

David's long-term aim to arrange a foreign tour for the boys' hockey teams was finally realised in a successful tour of Holland and Germany in 1989. Having continued to play for the Dundee Wanderers' 1st XI well into his forties and then served the game as a District Selector in the 70s, it was typical of his love of sport and his competitive spirit that he remained a stalwart of the Staff v. Pupils matches right

up to his retirement in 1992, in his sixtieth year. David was also a long-serving House Master of Lindores House.

Another major contribution to the extra-curricular life of the School came in the form of the design and preparation of sets for the school's annual drama productions. The summer terms just wouldn't have been the same without David's sets-teams, indoors and out, enjoying the hard work, the fun and learning something more of teamwork.

David was also a very keen angler and was responsible for introducing young people to this particular activity. Many of his pupils will recall the fly-tying classes and angling outings where they were first "hooked" to this life-long pursuit. Others will remember the interest and happiness of school trips abroad – to Switzerland in 1970, to Greece in 1985, 86 and 87 – to which David's sound organisation and reliability, breadth of knowledge and fantastic nature brought an additional and special dimension.

A continued supporter of the activities of the School's alumni groups, namely the Old Boys' Club, David regularly attended their annual dinners or joint fundraising events with the Old Girls' Club. He would frequently provide his own pieces of artwork for use at auctions and would always be on hand to help when required.

Fellow staff members who had the pleasure of working with David will affectionately remember his own brand of lively wit which he brought with him to the Staff Room every day, his kindly humour and his ability to lighten the "teacher talk".

David is survived by his beloved wife, Sheila Wilkie, his daughter Fiona, his grandchildren Alastair and Fraser and his great-grandchildren. He will be dearly missed by his friends and family and of course the entire High School of Dundee community.