



Mr. Robert 'Bob' Nimmo 1932 - 2021

Former Rector 1977 - 1997

The High School of Dundee was deeply saddened to learn that our former Rector, Robert Nimmo (OBE., MA., MEd., FBIM., FRSA), died peacefully in his sleep on Tuesday 9th November 2021.

Robert Nimmo (or Bob, as he was known as to his family, friends and colleagues), took up the position of Rector in 1977, a role in which he remained for the following 20 years.

Having studied at the University of Edinburgh and graduated with Double Honours in French and German, Robert officially began his teaching career at George Heriot's School in Edinburgh. During his 19 successful and fulfilling years there, he was promoted first to Head of French and then to Depute

Headmaster before being appointed to HSD in 1977. Prior to beginning his teaching career, he worked for the Army's Intelligence Corps where he trained as a Russian Interpreter.

Whilst working full-time, Robert received his Master of Education degree and, based on his thesis on "Independent Schools in the United States", was awarded a scholarship where he spent six weeks visiting independent schools and institutions across the USA.

Throughout his career, Robert gained a significant reputation as a leading educationist and was influential in the development of Scottish education. This was largely due to his appointments with major educational agencies including: Convener of the Modern Languages Panel of the Scottish Examination Board; member of the Scottish Central Committee on the Curriculum; member of the Governing Board of the SEB (later its Vice-Chair); and his involvement with the 5-14 Programme, the Howie Committee and Higher Still. The latter two bodies had a direct impact on the reform of upper secondary education, as well as reshaping the Scottish educational system.

As a result of his personal commitment to educational development and the quality of his contributions, Robert was awarded an OBE in 1990 for his services to education. As well as highlighting his own successes and contributions, it further enhanced the reputation of HSD as one of Scotland's leading schools.

During his two decades leading the School, Robert steered the transition in status from Grant-Aided to Independent School, which enabled HSD to raise its own finances through the introduction of school fees. His dynamic leadership resulted in an effective and essential senior management team and the development of an attractive educational experience. He was also instrumental in the promotion of the Assisted Places Scheme, which offered young people from all backgrounds the opportunity to benefit from an HSD education.

Throughout his tenure as Rector, Robert also oversaw the expansion of the F6 curriculum; he encouraged senior pupils to pursue more advanced study and to broaden their overall educational experience. Such enhancements resulted in increased year group sizes. He was supportive in terms of developing extra-curricular experiences as well as academic ones. For example, he extended the activities available to include choral and instrumental opportunities, drama, debating, the CCF, Duke of Edinburgh and the popular “Friday 9” activities. He spearheaded the launch of the School’s charitable Interact Club and the Young Enterprise Groups, which served to provide even more opportunities to our senior years pupils and are still popular today.

A keen traveller himself, Robert was influential in developing the School’s calendar of foreign exchange visits and trips. In the years following this expansion, pupils travelled to countries including France, Spain, Germany, Poland, Switzerland and the USA. Sports teams were fortunate to venture to Canada and The Netherlands, while Music and Drama groups travelled to Vienna, Salzburg and Prague to perform for a wide variety of audiences.

Above all, Robert’s active encouragement and steady support of all aspects of school life were essential in providing our pupils with access to a wide range of opportunities; academic, sports and extra-curricular.

Bob Nimmo was devoted to the High School and maintained his links and interest with the school throughout his retirement. He and his wife Hilary were regular guests at all the key events in the school calendar and he was always keen to be up to date with all that was going on behind the pillars. He took time to lend his support to all aspects of school life and remained a champion for the purpose, drive and ambition of the school.

You can read our tribute to Mr. Nimmo in full on our website here: <https://www.highschoolofdundee.org.uk/news-and-events/news/robert-nimmo-obe>