



The Very Rev James Weatherhead 1931 – 2017 Class of 1949

James Weatherhead, born in 1931, attended The High School of Dundee from 1936 to 1949, with the exception of one year when he was evacuated to Alyth during the war. He very much enjoyed being a member of the Rifle Club, as well as captaining the Hockey Team 2nd XI. A part of Wallace House, he was also an avid reader.

Prior to National Service in the Navy, and training for the Ministry at New College, James studied law at the University of Edinburgh, graduating from the same in 1954. This equipped him well for his ultimate position as Principal Clerk of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, as did his earlier experience as Parish Minister in Rothesay, and Montrose.

His room in the Church Offices had a notice on the door saying "Please Disturb", as he always welcomed colleagues coming in to seek advice, either from within the offices or from elsewhere, and considered it a great privilege to do so.

In retirement, he produced with colleagues, a new book entitled 'The Constitution and Laws of the Church of Scotland'. This was a rather different publication from the many imaginative articles he had written in earlier years for "The Scotsman", which presented the Christian gospel in novel, and often light-hearted ways.

Although by nature a reserved and quiet man, and a life-long abstainer, he was a powerful and effective preacher. When he was Moderator, he was one of the few to find the content of one of his sermons gaining front page coverage in the press. His ability to hold the Church of Scotland together, at a time when strongly held opposing views threatened to disrupt its unity, was no doubt helped by his early experience of Edinburgh student politics in the Union, and the SRC. These places were most likely where his quick-witted sense of humour was no doubt formed. His jokes were never unkind, and even the respected senior colleague, who preached for too long at a particular Church Service, did not mind receiving a signed long service certificate from him afterwards.

He had a prodigious memory for Church people, and Church matters in which he had been involved. Furthermore, he had a keen eye, and a steady hand, which helped him navigate the often treacherous waters of the west coast with notable skill, and efficiency. These attributes also helped him play his Dolmetsch and other recorders, with accuracy, sensitivity, and great enjoyment, especially when playing with a group of special friends in a domestic environment. The group usually included his wife, for whom he had bought a spinet in the early days of their marriage.

James is survived by his wife Anne, and two sons; also by his sister Janette Hetherington and his brother John Weatherhead. James and his family have a proud and rich history of attendance at the School, with his father, Leslie Weatherhead, being a former Secretary to the Board of Directors, as well as a previous President of the Old Boys' Club. Further to this, his mother, Janet Smith, was one of the early Presidents of the Old Girls' Club.

He will be missed particularly by his family, especially those who never once had to call out the lifeboat in their many years of sailing together in the summer! Also, by many in the Church who knew him to be a safe pair of hands when storms were brewing, and those who will remember him most as a loyal friend, and a trusted companion.