

South Yorkshire RU stalwart Gerry Roberts dies

Yorkshire Rugby Union in general and South Yorkshire in particular, lost a great friend and a tireless worker with the death last week of Mr Gerry Roberts after a long illness. He was 78.

His club rugby connections were with the Sheffield Tigers club, who he always spoke of with great pride, but his affiliation to the South Yorkshire clubs as a group was very strong and he always had a special affection for student rugby in that area.



He was often to be found at the midweek games at both the Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam Universities, even in the later stages of his illness.

He was a Referee for many years, and later Chair of the South Yorkshire Referees Society. He was made an Honorary Life Member of the Yorkshire Referees Society in 1997.

He joined the Yorkshire Committee in 1980 and became President of the County in season 1992-93.

He chaired the South Yorkshire Committee for several seasons and was also deeply involved in a number of sub-Committee projects, including the formation of 'A' team leagues and the preparation of a Development Plan for Yorkshire Rugby.

"He was the Crown Price of Rugby Union in South Yorkshire," said Lesley Bentley, a county committee colleague for many years. "He was a mentor for so many young rugby folk in that area and was a very popular chap. There are thousands of young people whose Rugby careers were influenced by Gerry's enthusiasm over the years and who owe him a debt of gratitude, though he was too modest to ever see it that way.

"I will always remember him as a very composed and calm personality who never became irritated, even during the most controversial debates. He was always one to pour oil on troubled waters and stay calm. It was a big part of his popularity.

"He always remained cheerful and optimistic during his illness, which lasted well over two years. He was a good man who was dedicated to Rugby Union and will be much missed."

He leaves a wife Vi, a regular companion on many of his rugby outings, sons David and Peter and a grandson Ashley.

The funeral service will be held at Holy Trinity Church, Grove Road, Millhouses, Sheffield S7 2GY on Thursday, November 30 at 1.45pm.

Issued by Tony Simpson, RFU North Press Officer (07764 336708)