

## **REMEMBERING PAUL**

**LE CHEVALIER**

**PAUL ANDRE LEO ALPHONSE MARIE DE LA PIQUERIE**

**b.31 10.1940 – d.29.01.2017**

**When our then Head of Chambers Lionel Blundell QC informed us – as Heads of Chambers were able to do in those days – that he had just appointed a new tenant in chambers, a fellow member of Grays Inn called Le Chevalier Paul de la Piquerie, we were expecting something – well – a bit French. There is a Rue de la Piquerie in the city of Lille. Louis XIV bestowed the hereditary title of Chevalier on many of its noble citizens. Remembering PG Wodehouse’s famous description of the look of terror which passes over the face of any Englishman when he is about to be addressed in French, we secretly re-opened our O Level textbooks.**

**This was an early demonstration of the disconnect between label and contents of tin. Paul was a great example of the English gentleman and a great man. We mourn his passing, and we miss him.**

**Professionally, Paul was a key contributor to the building of Falcon Chambers’ reputation in its now chosen field of work. After sharing the general common law experience (including crime) which we all underwent in chambers at the time – in Paul’s case on the Western Circuit - he built up a classic and highly effective chambers practice in property law. He was a clear, forceful and effective advocate in court. Former pupils and opponents speak**

of his powers of cross-examination, which was a bruising experience for anyone who had something to hide. In time he became a Recorder and Chairman of Agricultural Land Tribunals, but brushed aside suggestions from a high level that he might make judging a full-time job.

In chambers he was a dramatic, vivid presence, a striking and complete individual. He was a power-dresser in the best of British style from his in-your-face three-piece pin-striped or tweed suits to the shoes with their steel heels which rang across the courtroom floor. At least one of his instructing solicitors confessed to being overawed by the very sound of his tread.

The dramatic effect was reinforced of course by his pipe-smoking: the pipe rack on his desk, the bottomless tobacco bowl containing only the strongest blend, the pyrotechnics of lighting up and the consequential smog in which he – and his pupils – worked. He had a monstrously large version of the most expensive fountain pen in the world, signing all his documents and branding all his law reports with an elegant bold black signature. He improved his golf by using the basement of 11 King's Bench Walk as a practice putting-green. There was definitely something French about him: I think the word is *panache*.

His professional practice was underpinned by strong ethical values. For most of our joint years in practice, we had rooms next door or very near to each other, at 11 King's Bench Walk and in Falcon Chambers, and I became acutely aware of his highly developed sense of indignation at bad behaviour by litigants and at bad points being taken against him or in front of him. He would stride into my room asking what did I think of this (whatever it was). I could usually share his outrage.

Paul was devoted to his family – to Marian, who was a fantastic support to him, especially when health problems cropped up, to his mother and sister. He was very proud of the achievements of Paul Junior.

But behind the bold exterior Paul was a shy man. It was Marian who persuaded him to join his chambers contemporaries at the retirement dinner we gave him to celebrate so many years of companionship. The pipe rack, the cheerful knowing smile, the well-stocked law library and the general clamour and smoke emanating from his room are well-remembered. It is a privilege to have known him.

Derek Wood.

09.05.2017.