

Tributes to Derek Stark

I much enjoyed meeting Derek and your friends and colleagues when visiting in February to present his LMSA award and am very sorry to hear of his passing on. A relatively small number of people such as Derek around the Country are at the very heart of our organisation and we are all hugely indebted to him for his vast contribution over a very long period.

Please convey my sympathy and kind wishes, and those of fellow Board members, to all at Basildon RA and Essex RA, and most of all to Peggy and other family members.

Derek will be remembered during a period of silence at the Board meeting on 1st September.

Bart O'Toole
Board Member
RAE

What a sad loss to us ALL. A man who had respect from not only referee's but players as well. As you said he always had a smile on his face. A person to whom you could always turn to for advice and on many occasions I did.

Councillor Kevin Blake
Level 6 Referee

Whenever I attended the RA meetings Derek always asked how my refereeing was going and whether I still enjoyed refereeing. On the few occasions Derek assessed me on the Essex Senior League he was always complimentary. I remember one occasion where he put my name as Richard on his assessment form because they put the wrong name in the Essex Senior League handbook, the next meeting he was so apologetic just shows the sort of man he was and I will sorely miss him!

Robert Yeldham
Basildon Member
Referee

I can only express how shocked and saddened I was to hear of the news that you had the unfortunate duty to circulate.

I too have a lot to thank Derek for in my years of refereeing and always remember the fact that he was the final assessor I had watching me in the year I attained my class 1. His comments on that day - along with his wisdom and spoken words on the many, many other occasions I was privileged to be in his company - will never leave me.

A very sad day.

Chris Manley
Basildon Member
Level 5 Referee

I am so sorry to hear the news. Derek helped me out me a lot assessing me going from Class 2/1. After I got my Class 1 Derek came to watch me on the Essex Senior League to give me advice that I greatly appreciated.

Much regrets

Colin Overall
Chairman
Thurrock RA

Very sad news indeed.

As you probably know we lost a close colleague and referee friend earlier in the year so fully appreciate what a sad time this is for you all.

I personally had known Derek for many years through my involvement as delegate and always had utmost respect for his knowledge and wise counsel.

Please forward the best wishes of the Halstead & District Referee's Society to members of Basildon RA.

Terry Hunt
Halstead R A

I had the pleasure of knowing Derek for many years and I must say what struck me about him was his knowledge of the game and in particular towards the development of referees.

He was always the gentleman and always had time for people. I had the pleasure of speaking at one of the Basildon Society meetings a couple of years ago and he was the first to shake my hand and welcome me.

I am so pleased that I was present at the recent 50 years dinner held for the Basildon RA where I had a good chat with Derek and shared a few laughs.

When I heard from Chris Lee that Derek had sadly passed away, I was stunned, as everyone was.

I set about calling people from across the grassroots game to break the sad news, which showed how much he was thought of, and how much he will be missed.

My thoughts are with his wife Peggy and his family.

A true gentleman, good friend and was an honour to have known him.

God Bless.

Tony Hoskins
Secretary SBCVL

Your words could not have put my thoughts and sadness of the loss any better.

He was a man who shall be missed immensely throughout football in Essex. There are many who have moved on to become better people because of him and his kind words of wisdom and guidance when he assessed.

Even when he was removed from the assessing panel due to his age, he was always to be seen at a local game offering the shoulder to lean on. Long may his memory continue.

It was an honour to have known him as a friend and mentor.

Peter Crowhurst
Honorary Member
Basildon RA

I was looking forward with anticipation to reading your email, especially as they are always interesting and very much welcome, however today I was taken aback with the news of the death of another one of the Basildon Referees Society's stalwarts

Like everyone who knew Derek Stark, I was truly shocked and saddened by his untimely death; I would like to offer my sincere condolences to all of Derek's family, friends and colleagues.

I had the utmost respect and admiration for Derek; his words of wisdom were of great benefit to me during my refereeing career. Derek had many fine qualities as a man, and one of the most endearing qualities was the fact that he was a Gentleman in the true meaning of the word.

Derek's influence and input into Basildon Referee's Society will be sorely missed by all, how ironic that his tribute to his friend the late Jack Sayer proved to be his last contribution on behalf of the society

God Bless Sir

Kevin Allen
Basildon Member

Many Thanks for letting me know and have the opportunity to express my sadness and also my total admiration of this man; he was an inspiration.

I have the same feelings as you, Derek was a beacon, a star, his face and smile spoke a thousand words.

I was very lucky, an honour in fact, to have him guide me through Class 3 to Class 1 back in the early eighties and I was so very pleased to meet up again with Derek at the Basildon Referees Society when I awarded Kyle Simmons his Essex & Herts Trophy in May this Year.

I feel like I have lost one of my close family.

Heaven has another Angel.

Steve Kerly
Referees' Appointments Secretary - EHBCC

Derek, an absolute gentleman and a friend to everyone. He analysed situations carefully and then gave first class advice in whatever field you care to mention.

Personally I looked to him as my confidant and the result was usually a perfect solution to my problem.

Matchmaker extraordinaire, he introduced me to my wife.

I will miss him and will never forget my friend.

Rest in peace Derek.

Ken Clementson
President
Basildon RA

Sorry I can't make it next Friday; I wish I could attend but as you know I will be out of the country.

I will, next Friday, take a few minutes to spare a thought for Derek's family and remember what a great person he was, a real inspiration to all those who were lucky enough to have known him.

Please pass on my deepest sympathies to Derek's family.

Stand tall and proud when you make your speech [Chris] I know it will be difficult but I'm sure you are just the person to do it.

Basildon RA will sadly miss this very special person.

Sean Marsh & Family
Honorary Secretary
Basildon RA

We had our first meeting of the season last night. I passed on the regretful news of Derek. We held a minute's silence and the members we very keen for me pass on our condolences and thoughts to his family and your society.

We would very much appreciate knowing the arrangements so we can join the rest of Essex referees in saying goodbye to a well-respected colleague.

Best wishes & deepest sympathy

Wade Norcott
Hon Secretary
Harlow Referees' Society

Derek Stark – the perfect gentleman.

That's how I remember "Our Derek". During the 30 years that I was a member of Basildon Referees Society I was fortunate enough to have Derek as an inspiration and role model of how to conduct ones self as a football match official at all levels of the game. Coming to the world of Refereeing as an uncompromising full back from the Basildon Sunday League and then trying to change into the fair and law abiding official applying the laws of the game I needed the wise words of Derek to keep putting me back on the right track.

Derek – always the picture of sartorial elegance-always doing and saying the right thing at the right time- absolutely correct but on a much lighter note – did anyone see Derek the Music Hall artiste perform the 1930's Sand Dance routine of Wilson ,Betty and Keppel dressed as a comedy Arab in hobnail boots, or see him dressed as a tramp eating fish and chips sitting in the middle of a Basildon restaurant floor or seeing him trying to control Uncle George Borley sitting in the front row at the Essex Referees Presentation "Stag" night?

Derek we all loved you – you always had a smile on your face – you spoke with a smile in your voice – and you left all those who were fortunate enough to have known you with a smile in their hearts.

Peter Brennan
Ex-Member
Basildon RA

So many people have had their say before but my task, in paying my personal tribute to a dear and trusted friend, is made no harder due to the depth of love & admiration that Derek engendered in everyone who knew him.

On Friday I will have the task of trying to encapsulate, in just a few words, the feelings of the many hundreds of referees who have benefited from Derek's guidance, the thousands of colleagues of who have encountered and enjoyed his beaming smile and the thanks we all owe to a man who was happiest when helping, advising and sharing his immeasurable wisdom – whatever the issue and without fear or favour.

There are few true gentlemen still around in life but it is a word which has rightly cropped up throughout the many tributes we have received since the news of Derek's death became widely known. I cannot recall a single moment when I heard Derek display the slightest hint of disrespect towards anyone, never witnessed a cross word pass his lips and never saw him look anything other than 'dapper', regardless of the circumstances!

At the time of his passing, Derek was unquestionably the 'father' of Basildon RA having held the roles of both President & Chairman (twice) and having been a member in excess of 35 years. The recent award of his Long & Meritorious Service Award (referred to by Bart O'Toole) is testimony to his true dedication to an organisation he cherished and a pastime, in refereeing, which would be subject to a greater degree of respect and enjoy a more positive profile if every player, manager & official could approach their contribution to the beautiful game with the same gusto and respect that Derek felt able to contribute.

Greatness is often over-stated; tributes are often over-done. I am certain that this is one occasion where this could never be possible.

Words could never express how much I will miss my mentor, my counsel and my friend. My life is better for knowing you; my future will always have something missing.

Farewell Derek, God Bless you and thank you for everything you gave to us all.

Chris Lee
Chairman
Basildon RA

With much regret I cannot be at the memorial service on Friday.

Derek was always very kind and always a happy person. I never saw him without a smile and a warm handshake always greeted me.

He always took the time to ask how I was getting on etc and seemed to be genuinely interested in the answers I gave, not just the run of the mill nod you get from some people.

Whenever I came to Basildon Society he would greet me and welcome me to the meeting.

He was also always to be found at a local football match somewhere, and again we'd stop and have a chat.

He really was just one of life's really nice guys, and he will be very sorely missed.

My thoughts are with his family at this most difficult of times.

Best regards

Fred Graham
National List Referee
Thurrock RA

We did not know Derek well unlike many of the committee members.

We will always remember on joining the Society after qualifying how he went out of his way to make us feel welcome.

He was a warm , friendly , genuine, enthusiastic man, who could relate to all, young and old.

His boundless enthusiasm , dedication and love of refereeing transcended age. He was always willing to offer help and advice.

He was a true gentleman a one off.

These few words are totally inadequate to express the esteem in which Derek is held.

Our thoughts and sympathies are extended to his family and friends and to the Committee and Members of the Society who have lost a valued and irreplaceable friend.

Carol & Colin Henwood
Basildon Members

I first met Derek was way back in the mid 1970,s at Eversely Road playing fields on a Sunday morning when I was a budding young referee going for promotion. To this day I have never forgotten the way I changed officiating following his assessment of my performance.

Derek had a wonderful gift of giving praise and delivering your not so good points to you with a smile on his face, which was quite unique indeed; he was blunt in his observations but true, honest and very sincere.

Derek was like a father of football to me, not only did he take an interest in my refereeing career but also life in general especially over the last few years. A true gentleman who I can say I never heard him raise his voice, get annoyed, or use ungentlemanly language throughout the time I knew him, but always greeted you with that lovely smile !

Just recently Derek accepted, and was my guest at an award ceremony, an evening of memories that I will value and cherish for many a year.

I cannot find words to say except "Thank You Derek" like so many others I will miss you very deeply.

Charlie Francis
Basildon Member
ECFA Representative to Basildon Area

A GREAT GUY!

He made me so welcome when I first joined Basildon Referee Society. There will be a void in the society that cannot be replaced

GOD BLESS HIM & CONDOLENCES TO HIS FAMILY

Tony Capon
Member
Basildon RA

As you pass along life's rich highway you often meet many people who have a profound affect on you both for good and bad reason.

Derek was most definitely one of the good elements of my journey so far.

Having sat and read many of the tributes posted by so many of our colleagues the endearing elements of them all are the quality that Derek gave to everybody from junior to senior colleagues. The ability to converse with so many so eloquently and to maintain the up most decorum and standards are to be admired.

Derek was undoubtedly the role model that you would set you children on how to conduct themselves. Always smartly dressed and appropriately for the occasion, polite and courteous, the most enlightening smile that you will ever see, loyal, respectful of all he came into contact with, a sense of humour that would both take and give a joke with pleasure, and the qualities of being a gentleman that can never be put into words.

Derek had a marvelous way of putting something to you as a suggestion but was politely telling you how you should be doing something. I found myself today thing about RA matters and realising my actions were guided by what Derek had said in previous meetings.

My deepest sympathies go to Peggy and her family who have to rebuild and regroup after this sudden and great loss. Everybody at Basildon RA who have lost their father figure, friend, mentor and confidant.

The mark of a man is what he leaves behind in heart and soul and mind. No great man is ever fully appreciated until his death.

Thank you Derek for passing on my highway I am truly honoured and grateful.

Andrew Snell
ERA Chairman
Harwich & District RA

When putting the original notice on the website I used the expression "true gentleman". In a world today there are very few who can either be described as true or a gentleman, Derek was both.

Whenever you met him you were always greeted by a warm infectious smile, always genuinely interested in you and your family, keen to find out what they had been up to. He had a great love for life which has now been cruelly taken but as he passes into the next life I am sure many more will be touched by his great warmth and love.

In all the years that I knew him, I never heard him utter a bad word about anyone. His generosity always saw him take the lead in getting others to think of the positive points, never anything bad or negative.

Nothing was ever too much trouble and he always found time to support people, whether it was family, friends or strangers, although strangers quickly became friends. He was always honest in his assessment of situations but such was his unique warm manner that no one could disagree with him, even when the truth may have hurt. So high was his integrity and wisdom, many people with whom he had become friends over the years would seek his counsel and advice, from the minor to the major problem, whether in football or of a personal nature. No matter how busy, he would always find time for you, to offer guidance and advice and head you down the right path. A void will now be left in this unique person's passing.

So many owe so much and if we could only bring a fraction into the world that Derek brought into this, the world would be a far better place.

Until we meet again, may you rest in peace

Paul & Gill Clarke
Webmaster
Basildon RA

I was very sorry to hear of the sad news of Derek's sudden death. It is with regret that I cannot be at the memorial service on Friday.

Derek was a member of the Belles & Beaux old time musical group; he loved being on stage and was a very talented member of the group - he had a natural gift.

Derek will be greatly missed by all of us at the Belles & Beaux. My thoughts are with Peggy and all the family at this very sad time.

God bless you Derek

Love from Julia Tideswell
Belles & Beaux Colleague