

## **North Yorkshire was the man, the man was North Yorkshire**

The huge number of people here today is a testimony to the immense standing which Barry had not only in North Yorkshire but the region and nationally. He achieved so much in his life that it will be difficult to get across to you today in a short time what an exceptional person he was or the extent to which he touched so many lives. But perhaps in such difficult circumstances that says a great deal about the life we have come to celebrate today. There was only one Barry Dodd.

I first met Barry some 20 years ago at a networking event in Leeds. We had both started our businesses in Thirsk and Bedale respectively 10 years prior and were going through the customary growing pains. His huge ability to talk to anyone at anytime made him well respected by so many whether it was in his business or the people he met in his countless other roles. Indeed that is why I believe this gift made him a very special Lord Lieutenant.

An early recollection was when I invited him to a dinner I was hosting at home for a bank. We changed the date and somehow I forget to advise Barry. He duly turned up on the front doorstep suited and booted to my shock and horror! I was wrong to think he would ever forgive me, there was some serious joking in future years about attention to diary dates Mr Kerfoot and my lack of organisational skills!

His ability to grasp opportunities identifying them early and persuading them with vigour was exceptional. Obviously that was a huge part of his success as a businessman, but I witnessed that on many occasions working with him for six years as his Deputy Chairman of the LEP - the largest land area of the 38 David Cameron created to push economic growth in a public / private sector partnership. Barry was in his element. A keen eye for long term strategy and with a rapidly building phone book of contacts to envy he became a powerful force in advocating all that is good about our region. Passionate and articulate when debating or presenting, Barry had a unique ability to take people along with him including myself on many occasions. He founded the LEP and created what it is today in his own words ' we punch well above our weight'. His legacy in LEP terms is to have made our organisation one of the leading rural LEPs in the country.

He made many deals in his business life and indeed in his LEP career he was very much a deal maker. He loved it! He once went to Dorset to buy a company with a colleague. They stayed in a farmhouse B&B about 10 miles away from the company. The farmer and his wife were very nosey and kept asking them why they had come to Dorset. Finally Barry's patience snapped and he told them 'we are in the secret service!'

A key concept he used so well was what he called 'soft power' quietly influencing and advocating to the people that mattered. He was very proud of the private sector involvement and growing influence which in the following story ably reflects this.

Not too long ago he went to a meeting in Leeds. He drove into the car park and alongside him the Minister he was due to meet drew up in his car. The Minister jumped out as said to Barry 'Wow Barry what a car I just love the Aston' to which he replied 'that's the difference Minister you work for the public sector and I work for the private sector'.

For me a defining moment was when he was made Lord Lieutenant. We had been in a breakfast meeting at my offices and at the end of the meeting he asked to see me alone. Walking to the window he said 'you are not going to believe what I am going to tell you in confidence- I have been asked to be Lord Lieutenant H M the Queens representative in our County. Can you believe that a businessman like me could achieve something like this? It was one of the few occasions I saw him struggling for words! The story of his 4 years as our Lord Lieutenant is legendary. He wanted to do it differently and he did. He has shaped it into a new more modern body with much greater emphasis on community but still maintaining dignity and purpose given he was Her Majesty's representative.

My son married a Californian girl last September and she works on Wall Street. Frances and Barry came to the wedding and my daughter in laws boss - a small tubby Wall Street bruiser if you ever saw one sat next to them at the reception. A couple of months ago Katie walked into her bosses office and to her surprise saw a framed photo of him with Frances and Barry at the wedding. Katie remarked 'you have a photo of our wedding David' to which he replied 'yes I am with the Queens representative.' When I told him the story he laughed like mad particularly when I added 'you have made it Barry you are on Wall Street now!'

His work with charities was inspirational because his approach was always both positive and caring. So many have benefited from his great ability to listen and act. Air Ambulance, Dementia Forward, RNLI, Two Ridings Community Foundation, Scouts & Guides, Cadets, Armed Forces are just some of the organisations he left his mark on. Similarly in education he was an extremely active Pro Chancellor of Hull University and Chaired the Council of Hull & York Medical School.

So what can we learn from this amazing life? He was a visionary who cared passionately about his County, region, communities and Country. One thing that stands out is that if you are remotely successful you have to pay back. Putting something back in public service terms was so very important to him. The help he gave to so many people he supported is living testimony to this philosophy. The out pouring of emotion and tributes show how he touched so many lives in a positive and life changing way.

My pal Barry, Inspirational leader, entrepreneur, engineer, visionary, mentor, public servant and dear friend.

One thing is for sure:

The legacy will live on in all those of us who held him in such high esteem and the world has been a better place for the 70 years he was on this earth.

**David A Kerfoot MBE DL**