

**John Walden Edwards (K44-55)** died on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2019 in Lister Hospital, Stevenage. He had been taken into hospital two weeks previously with a chest infection and never really recovered. Before that his hugely energetic input into Framlingham affairs had been curtailed by a series of strokes, one being particularly serious. A Memorial Service for John that was due to take place on 19th March at St. Giles Church, Codicote, Welwyn, had to be postponed due to Coronavirus. Similarly a planned Memorial Service at The College has been postponed until Covid19 precautions make this possible. John Edwards was a towering figure both within the Society, and also in his service to the Governing Board of the College. It is particularly sad that his passing cannot be properly commemorated.



John had a special affection for Brandeston Hall, having been one of the original pupils starting there when it opened in 1948. He was ever-present at Brandeston Birthday parties, and Speech days.



John was SOF President in 1977 and 1978, at a particularly young age, an early indication of his commitment to the Society and the College. His service to the College came in his long-term membership of the Board of Governors, his Chairmanship of what was then styled the Finance and General Purposes Committee, his deep commitment to stabilising College affairs at a time of particular financial pressure, and in his energetic promotion of appeals to OFs and the wider community.

Tributes to John were fulsome. Those closest to him in College affairs were particularly conscious of his contribution to the prospering of the College. John Kerr, former Governor commented that all who worked alongside John on behalf of the College greatly appreciated his grasp of the nuts and bolts and of

all those people that made up the community who were, and still are, a key part of putting Framlingham where it is today.

Richard Sayer, long-term friend and currently President of the Corporation noted that:

*We were both members of MCC. At every Lords Test I would head for the seats in front of the pavilion in front of the Bowlers Bar, where John almost without exception be occupying his habitual seat next to his friend, Roger, glass in hand, and (in the bad old days) a cigarette on the go. He was always good company and we became good friends. I only learnt recently that John had been a good cricketer and hockey player at Framlingham. He once took 4 wickets for 0 runs for Brandeston against Eversley House in 1950 and his play at left back for the well-regarded College Hockey XI in 1955 is remembered with some admiration by fellow team members. Richard concluded that: John read people well – his bluff style fooled me into being surprised by that skill. He was one of those people who had clear ideas and the strength of character to push them through, for the common good. He was a significant force for good.*

Andrew Fane, for many years Chairman of Governors while John chaired F and GP went further:

*John probably did more for the College over many years than almost any other OF. Things were pretty challenging when I became chairman 20 years ago but from day one of my tenure there was John, at my side. He was always committed, always available to pitch in and advise and help, and always able to summon a resolution to a pressing problem. He deployed huge knowledge of the College in all its facets and above all he had a wonderful way with people - he would take an angry older man out for a drink, or two - he would twinkle his charm at ladies. And it nearly always worked, and we moved on to fight our next battle. He made me as a new boy so welcome, and he helped us all to steer the College forward into so much calmer waters. I will be eternally grateful to him.*

There is also a family dimension. John's brother Ted (K53-62), and his sister Sally. Ted gave us the following tribute on behalf of the family:

*John had great “presence” which was evident to all who met him, and which ensured that whatever he became involved in, his views were put across strongly, but he was also always willing to put in the “hard yards” as well. This was particularly true of everything he did for Framlingham College. For so long “Fram” was John’s “raison d’etre” and for this reason he was involved for very many years, and made so many wonderful friends within the Framlingham circle.*

*John was always “big brother” to Sally and me, but we were always a very close-knit family unit, each of us fitting in in our own differing ways! John was always very supportive of all his family, friends and acquaintances and (this hardly needs saying) he was always the life and soul of any gathering!*

*Thinking of cricket and Framlingham there is one little episode which John would recall almost every time we were together. For a few years after I left school I organised the OF cricket and, in one particular year, he played against the College. In the School XI was a young chap, who John and I knew very well, called Pat Daniels. John was bowling and somehow took a wicket, and when Pat came out to bat, John suddenly decided that he would do his Johnny Wardle impersonation and he promptly bowled a head high full toss (a no-ball now - but not then”). Pat had a good swing at it and got a fine touch, which was caught by Edwards Junior behind the stumps. Caught Edwards E, bowled Edwards J. Those are the*

*facts, but the story has been embroidered in many different ways over the years. Apologies to Pat if he happens to read this!*

*Sally and I miss John an awful lot. I have his photo in my study which I frequently look at and smile, wondering what amusingly caustic comment would be on his lips.*

As well as leaving his younger brother and sister, John leaves his wife Veronica, and two daughters, Katherine (Kate) and Victoria (Tor) and also Kate's two children, Francesca and Alexander.

In conclusion, and to summarise the Framlingham viewpoint: John was a successful businessman. He channelled that talent, acumen and commitment back to the world of education, in the shape of his alma mater. The College and the Society have lost a hugely influential figure, a man whose energy and determination, allied to an appropriate peppering of bluff wit, made him something akin to a force of nature in College and SOF affairs. He was Framlingham through and through, and steeped in its values.