



AVON ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Established 1975, Affiliated to England Athletics

Cyril 'Cy' KNIBB

11th March 1943 - 13th December 2020

It is with great sadness that the Avon Athletic Association records the passing of a past Chairperson Cy Knibb. Cy had a great influence within athletics in the area and was recognised by Avon AA for his contribution by being awarded Life Membership in 2019. Cy was also a very well known figure in British Athletics.

He passed away in Swansea and was cremated in Llanelli on 6th January 2021. Only close family were permitted to attend the Funeral but it was also observed by close associates in the Avon area by video link.

Cy was born in the Cynon Valley in South Wales close to Aberdare. Trecynon to be exact. He went to Swansea University where in 1963 supported by the legendary Welsh National Coach Ron Pickering he qualified as an Athletics Coach. He also was initiated into 'Athletics Administration' at this time becoming President of the Swansea University Athletic Union. After graduating Cy embarked on a one year MSc in Management and also spent a lot of time and enthusiasm in developing the 'Welsh Dragons', a loose knit group of current and former runners from the four constituent groups of the University of Wales. Cy was founder, President and Secretary. The venture was never going to survive his ultimate departure to England but it was an early demonstration of his organisational abilities and his willingness to devote his energies to the administration of the sport.

Cy then moved to Basildon where he became Chairperson of Basildon AC and held positions with Essex AAA/WAAA and there qualified as a Senior Endurance Coach. He moved on with his work to Burton on Trent and then in the late 70's took a job with Dalgety Spillers and moved to Congresbury. He named his house 'Bannisters' where he lived with his wife Carol son Simon and daughter Rachel. Carol 'a lovely lady' unfortunately died at a young age and Cy later married again, this time to Marilyn. They had a son Matthew who became a prominent Hammer Thrower.

Cy first joined Bristol AC as it was then and quickly undertook Committee responsibility initially becoming their British League Team Manager whilst he also undertook various coaching responsibilities. His middle distance training group was legend at that time. He gradually progressed through the ranks with Bristol AC to become their Chairperson in 1987.

Avon AA also benefitted greatly from Cy's presence in the area where he began his broader involvement in the early 80's. He was initially involved with the coaching of young athletes and first undertook responsibility for coaching Avon Schools Teams. He is well remembered for training camps away from Avon famously on the sand dunes at Merthyr Mawr in Wales. He was also appointed as Midland Staff Coach for endurance during this time. His Avon administrative positions involved Coaching Secretary in 1983, Vice Chairperson in 1985 and Chairperson in 1987. He is again noted for his organisational skills particularly as Meeting Manager of the Annual Track & Field Champs and for his close attention to the then sponsors 'Sun Life' who proved invaluable to Avon AA at that time.

Cy was a far sighted administrator and as your present Avon AA Chairperson notes he was "a forward thinker able to see the bigger picture and look for opportunities to improve athletics and the people in the sport generally". "He was an inspirational coach and far sighted administrator". Cy "loved a good Committee Meeting" according to his son Simon.

Through work Cy moved first to Basingstoke and then to Corby where he became Chairperson first to Corby AC then the East Midlands Region and finally he was appointed Chair of the EA National Council and became a Director of England Athletics.

In 2009 he returned to live in Bristol. became Track & Field Team Manager again and finally resumed duties as Chairperson. He also re-joined the Avon AA Committee and was instrumental in the County organising mid-week Open Track and Field Meetings at the Kip Keino Stadium which greatly benefitted both the athletes and boosted the revenues of the Association.

He stood down in 2015 as Chairperson of Bristol & West AC and then departed to live close to his daughter in the Mumbles area of Swansea. He became unwell in 2019 and went to live in a Care Home eventually contracting Covid 19 in late 2020. Friends and colleagues in the Avon area mourn Cy's passing and his great loss to Athletics.

The name Knibb does live on in local as his grandsons are currently significant 400m competitors for Swindon Harriers and his grand daughter also runs distance races, cross country and Marathons for Swansea Harriers. Something which Cy with his talent in as an Endurance Coach was extremely proud of.

R.I.P. Cy.

Mike Strange – Life Member.

With contributions from John Robbins, Gwynn Davis, Christine Rose, Bob Lavis, Raymond Gooding, and the Knibb family.