

Bob King (1937-2006)

Robert Charles King was born 5 March 1937 in Tower Hamlets. He studied physiology at Sheffield University, where he first learned to play bridge. After leaving university he married Pat & they adopted two children. When National Service beckoned, Bob decided to join up for nine years in the RAF medical corps. He served in a number of UK locations and in Aden. After leaving the RAF Bob joined Pfizer as manager of biological computing. He designed the hardware & software for a distributed system of computers, long before PCs were around. At this time he took up bridge directing as well as playing. He studied in the evenings for a second degree in Electronics Engineering from London University. In the late 1980s Bob & Pat divorced & he married Rachael with whom he had three sons. Bob continued to work at Pfizer until 1995 when he took early retirement. He spent most of his free time tinkering with computers, playing or directing bridge, breeding tropical butterflies & growing plants for them as well as watching sport. After retiring Bob joined the volunteer agency & worked in the Demelza House shop in Sittingbourne, acting as a volunteer driver and also as a mediator.

Bob was involved in bridge administration for nearly thirty years. He was first elected to the KCBA committee in 1977. He served as competitions manager from 1978 to 1985 & membership registrar & master points secretary from 1979 to 1985. Bob left the committee in 1985 to concentrate on developing his career as a tournament director.

Bob first began directing at club level in 1970 & moved on to directing county events. He became an EBU trainee in 1982, B director in 1983 at which time he became a trainer for club courses. He was promoted to A director in 1987 & senior A director in 1996. He retired from the EBU panel in 2002. In the meantime he returned to the Kent Committee in 1991 as chief tournament director which position he held until his retirement in 2002. He was succeeded as chief tournament director by his wife Rachael, with whom he ran many successful events.

He was elected president of KCBA in 2004 to universal acclamation, a clear indicator of his popularity with members. He received the Dimmie Fleming award in 2004.

Bob had a biting sense of humour & was a very private person, reserved and quiet when not directing bridge, always kind, very generous & rarely complained. Whatever he did Bob's enthusiasm for doing the job well & his enjoyment were self evident. He was always welcoming at events, very understanding when called on to deal with infringements and a very good teacher of would-be directors.

Bob was taken poorly in June 2006. During his recovery he suffered a number of heart attacks & a triple bypass planned was not successful. His heart failed and he died 15 August 2006.