

On Wednesday 6th November a large congregation of friends , family, former colleagues and ex- pupils attended a Requiem Mass in Farnborough , to celebrate the life of Dr. James Stanley Leeming MA (Oxon) Ph.D , the former headmaster of Hayes School.

As Headmaster of the school from 1969 to 1990 and as a local Keston resident, it is right that we pay tribute to Dr Leeming and the leadership which he gave to the school.

He was born in East Ham in 1933, son of a fire officer and spent his childhood years evacuated in Suffolk. After the war and before University he joined the RAF rising to the rank of Flight Lieutenant. From there he attended St John's Oxford, where he studied History and Economics. Resisting a career in the City, Dr Leeming followed his vocation and trained to be a teacher. He began his career at Bancroft's, an independent school in Woodford, Essex. Whilst there he organized the Combined Cadet Force, something that would become a significant and important element in his life in years to come. After a successful time there he went on to be second master in a new comprehensive school, Eltham Green.

Following success at Eltham Green, Jim took on a new challenge as Headmaster at Hayes School – at that time, one of Bromley's problem schools. With the support of his Deputy Heads, Isabel Markham and Brian Crowdy, he designed and implemented what might today be described as a 'turnaround'. He inspired Hayes' pupils and staff alike, encouraging all to believe that there were no limits to what could be achieved, and making confidence, pride and success the elements that characterised Hayes School. Indeed, under his leadership, Hayes rapidly acquired a reputation as one of Bromley's best schools – a place where children of all abilities could flourish whether it be in sport, music, drama or academia.

The ATC was to feature again in Dr Leeming's career when, with the help of the late Mr. Brian Crowdy and Godfrey Smith, 768 Squadron was transferred to Hayes. With his unswerving support, the squadron became an important feature in the lives of many pupils at Hayes school – girls and boys alike. His long tenure at the school provided stability, and loyalty from his staff.

During his retirement he was able to devote his time to his love of gardening, Spain and music. He and his wife were also active members of the Catholic Church in Locks Bottom.

Dr Leeming was proud of the school and the achievement of so many pupils and the one abiding memory most pupils have of him was his picking-up of litter.

Another remarkable fact was the number of former colleagues who attended the funeral, many of whom have been retired for over 20 years. In fact the service was partly conducted by Father Annear, from Launceston, Cornwall. Ex-Hayes pupils will recall him as Mr Annear, the modern languages teacher!



By Oliver Pereira, with thanks to Mrs May and Duncan Crowdy.