

Vale Robert Paddick 1939-2001

Robert Paddick, an active contributing member of ASSH, died on 12 July 2001. He was diagnosed with a brain tumour a few weeks before the annual conference in Adelaide but tragically did not recover from the operation.

Bob was born in Victor Harbour, South Australia on May 14, 1939. He completed an honours Arts degree at Adelaide University in 1961, majoring in Physical Education and Comparative Philology. His postgraduate work was undertaken at the University of Alberta, Canada where he completed an MA in 1968. He later took a second masters in Philosophy (MA) at Adelaide University.

Bob was senior lecturer and coordinator of the School of Physical Education at Flinders University from 1972 until his death in July, 2001. As a practicing philosopher he was a respected scholar and a gentle man who excelled in making people think clearly about issues – not only students but also colleagues. Kahlil Gibran said of the esteemed teacher: 'he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind'. Bob was such a man.

He was valued by the PE profession and made a Fellow of the Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation in 1981. He was interested in the concept of Olympism and publicly defended the philosophical ideals of de Coubertin against the increasing commercialization of sport and athletes. He lectured at the International Olympic Academy in Ancient Olympia and was a cofounder (with Ian Jobling and John Daly) of the Australian Olympic Academy. He was delighted to be a torch bearer for the relay preceding the Sydney Olympics.

Bob was an active sportsman all his life. He admired excellence in elite sportsmen and women and sought to understand their commitment by training for and running a marathon and engaging in extended rowing events. He played golf regularly and as ASSH members will recall was a competent (but casual) soccer and tennis player.

Bob Paddick was one of my closest friends. We both enjoyed the give and take of reasoned argument and delighted in frequent discussion over controversial issues. These discussions always led me to the 'threshold of my own mind' for which I am grateful to Bob. I will miss him terribly.

John A. Daly

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Bob Paddick was the first Treasurer of ASSH and since that time he was involved in many activities of the Society including writing articles and book reviews, presenting conference papers and helping to organise ASSH conferences. At the time of his death, on the third day of the conference, he was a member of the ASSH conference organising committee and was scheduled to give a conference paper.

Bob went about his business in a professional and unostentatious manner but when Bob agreed to write a book review I always knew that it would be well crafted, within the word length and submitted on time. He could always be relied upon.

Bob was very much an individualist. He had a deep interest in the unfashionable subject of the amateur philosophy of sport and the moral and ethical basis of play. I regard his short essay on 'Amateurism' in the *Oxford Companion of Australian Sport* as one of the best thematic essays in the book. In his paper at 1999 conference on the 'Olympics in the Next Millennium' Conference on 'A meaning for Olympism in the new millennium' he concluded his presentation with a wide-ranging idealist critique of the Olympic Games:

The Games, too, can still convey the essential meaning of Olympism if the media is sensitive to the essential nature of the athletic endeavour. The dangers here are ones of overwhelming the message with other messages, 'using athletics as an excuse for having a party, for selling advertising space, for showing the superiority of a political system, for promoting a tourist industry or economy of a country, or for entertainment'.

I remember Bob best as a fine teacher with a twinkle in his eye and a great sense of humour. He had a wonderful ability to communicate superbly with all comers. Bob stood calmly at the Olympic symposium in Perth in 1995 when passions ran high and some of the younger members of ASSH took exception to the format of the panel. Bob, a member of the panel, took the unusual step of waiving his first opportunity to state his position. It could have been the action of a wily old campaigner waiting to observe the lie of the land. But I think not. Bob simply wanted to engage with the panel's critics. He was certainly not fussed as to who won the argument. He just wanted to debate the issues.

Given that we have so few ethicists in ASSH Bob's death is a loss to sports studies in Australia. We have also lost a good colleague and friend who worked selflessly and quietly and behind the scenes.

Richard Cashman
President, Australian Society for Sports History