

George R A Copus 1924— 2022

Naval Officer, International Banker, MCC Cricketer, MA BSc (Hons), FSCA, FCIB, FCMI, (visiting Fellow Durham University Business School).

He saw considerable sea service going to sea during **World War Two** -having served for a few months beforehand in the 117, Leadenhall Street, City branch of The Chartered Bank of India Australia and China (as it then was, the branch previously had been **the P & O Banking Corporation**, which Chartered Bank had taken over). He served as a Communications Officer in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean theatres of war which took him in support of the landings in Sicily, Italy, and the South of France and he continued to serve at sea until 1950 **when he rejoined 'The Chartered Bank' (now Standard Chartered Bank Group)** an association he thoroughly enjoyed and of which he always spoke highly and most warmly.

He had a great love of the sea and served for many happy years as a lieutenant in the **Royal Naval Reserve** which was always one of his great interests in life particularly the time spent as a signals officer at HMS Mercury where apart from training he managed over a period of years to play a considerable amount of naval cricket.

During his banking career he served in the U.K and overseas - in India, Libya, Lebanon, Cyprus and Eastern Europe and travelled extensively to Canada, the Middle East, South Africa, and the Soviet Union, at one time attending the International Banking Summer School at Moscow University. (Where he participated in what was mistakenly thought to have been **the first game of cricket in Moscow**)

In 1974 he became an executive director of the **Standard Chartered Merchant Bank, and many of the associated Group companies with responsibilities for Corporate Finance, Special and Corporate Lending, and Leasing and the development with his colleagues of a wide international presence based on the Group's global branch network.**

A highly successful period followed due, he insists, to his luck in having around him the highly skilled and motivated, (and he insisted the most tolerant) team, that supported him. He hoped setting a firm base for the bank's success in the future years ahead.

He also served as a non-executive director on the boards of many other companies and his seniority and expertise led in 1984 to the Bank of England requesting he join the small team of banking experts they had put together to attempt the rescue of the much publicised troubled Johnson Matthey Bank. Its demise would almost certainly have had most serious consequences for the London Bullion Market and banking markets generally

The reorganisation and rescue of the bank was one of the most successful ever undertaken in the City. This was followed by further directorships, often where specialist attention was seen to be necessary.

He had a wealth of stories to tell about his career. These included working in Cyprus during the violent intercommunal clashes between the ethnic Greek and the Turkish communities, working alongside Lonrho and its chief executive **Tiny Rowland, in amongst other things, their bid to buy House of Fraser and Harrods, with Rowland's subsequent takeover battle with Al Fayed; and in the world of entertainment advising Sir Lew Grade, the great entrepreneur, with his television, film and theatre empire of**

Associated Television (later ACC); also the **unusual world of bullion banking**, the joys and problems of **big ticket leasing**, and invariably recognising and dealing with the effects of market misjudgements that led to the crisis and recession of the 1980's.

With a first degree in economics and statistics he later decided to go further as a post-graduate to obtain a Masters degree in a subject which he was no stranger to, with his wealth of experience, that of strategic financial management and global economics.

He became a visiting Fellow of the University of Durham Business School developing a close relationship which he enjoyed greatly and valued highly.

He said he recognised that the world he was working in, however successful as it strove to encompass the global economic and vastly rewarding investment scene, was really at times too narrow and blinkered to the wider realities. He felt there **was a danger of not relating lessons of the past to the new financial world** unfolding with its greater freedoms but lesser constraints, and not recognizing the dangers inherent in a less regulated marketplace with unchecked dynamic and complex economic patterns fast emerging. **How right he was!!!**

He chose to write his dissertation and later various papers on a topic he believed to be of considerable current interest and critical concern, particularly to those in his own world of finance and international trade who he hoped would benefit from them. **His subjects covered 'The Path to Globalisation, International Capital Markets, the New Economy and the Complexity Paradigm'¹**. On which he would often speak based on the theme of 'Global Reality'. He went on in his later years to lecture and became an after dinner speaker on these subjects (and if pushed hard on his early years at sea in the Battle of The Atlantic!!)

George was very appreciative of the awards from the Bank of England: the Governor's Awards for his outstanding contribution in 1985 and 1988 and; 2015 the Joseph King Memorial Trophy for his outstanding contribution to International Banking.

He had a **passionate love of cricket** (once taking ten wickets for eight runs) which he played at a high standard both at club and MCC level and he remained over many years actively, and latterly as a retired member, in the Royal Naval Reserve. He also was an active member of The Special Forces Club and The Naval Club.

He was a liveryman of three City Livery Companies, **The Worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards (pretty good he thought for a banker!)**. **The Worshipful Company of International Bankers (providing a bit of a balance he would say) and to whom he had a close and valued relationship, and The Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers (whose school he had attended).** He was also a Fellow of **The Institute of Financial Services, The Association of International Accountants, and The Chartered Institute of Management.**

Above all he loved his wife Deborah and his family dearly and was to be seen with, and supporting them at all opportunities. Delighting in their successes, whether canvassing for his eldest son Richard in parliamentary elections, the graduation of his daughter Anne in interior design, her happy marriage, and his younger son David's graduation with a Masters Degree at Durham Univ. Plus of course many cold and wet days watching them all at football, cricket, and lacrosse !!! or just being together. **He is survived by his wife Deborah, his daughter Anne, and his two sons Richard and David, grandchildren, Melanie, Anthony, Dylan, Imogen, Piers, Charlie and Harry, and his great-grandchildren Elsie and Daisy.**