



Lord Macdonald of River Glaven Kt QC, Warden of Wadham College

Welcome

I'd like to welcome you all to this memorial for James Morwood. He would, I think, have been pretty tickled by the thought that this event should be taking place in a theatre, of all places, and a pretty nice one at that. And I'd like to thank Jack Ridley for playing the piano as we assembled.

This was the music that James would often ask for when he was holding a dinner in Wadham, and Jack would play the piano on the balcony as everyone arrived. We'll hear from Jack again later, playing another of James' favourite pieces.

In fact, Jack was fortunate enough, like so many of you, to have been taught by James, and so were six others who will be speaking or performing in the next hour or so. I think we can all agree that James' former students, and all that they have done with their lives since he taught them and befriended them (for with James the two went together), represent a lasting part of his legacy.

James was born in Belfast in 1943, brought up in Surrey, and educated at St John's, Leatherhead, and at Peterhouse, Cambridge, where he read Classics for Part I and English for Part 2.

After a Diploma in Education at Merton, he was appointed to teach Classics and English at Harrow, where he remained productively and very happily for three decades.

In 1996, he came to Oxford to run language teaching for the Classics Faculty here. It was to our profound and lasting benefit that he was elected to a Fellowship at Wadham, where he remained a central and comforting part of the community, even in his retirement, and right up to his death last September.

While he was at Harrow and then later when he was in Oxford, James played a leading role in the promotion of Greek and Latin teaching nationally and internationally, through his books, his travels, and his leadership.

I'm told that an introductory Greek course has just been published by Emily Matters, a colleague in Sydney, the first such textbook to be published in Australia — and it is dedicated to James.

At Wadham he was extraordinarily generous in taking on college jobs: at various times he served as Dean, Dean of Degrees, Steward of Common Room, Editor of the Gazette, and even as Wadham's so-called 'Designated Premises Supervisor'— a role that put him in charge of policing the College's relationship with alcohol. I am told that he was especially proud of the 100% mark he achieved in the test required by the licensing laws.

All these things were done while he carried out his university duties, taught, wrote books, and nurtured his many friendships.

I know that much is going to be said about James' many qualities this afternoon. For my part, I only had the privilege and pleasure of knowing him for the last five years of his life.

But I should like to say that that I found him to be the loveliest of men. Funny, wise, gentle, a wholly civilised man utterly free of petty judgmentalism, if not entirely free of a love for gossip, I thought

James the epitome of an enlightenment scholar, his life a tapestry of enlightenment values- which is a beautiful thing.

And I want to say one other thing- that all this, and all the delight and affection that his company represented to his friends, was underpinned by a fierce commitment to working hard, to doing whatever it was that he was doing as well as it could ever be done.

James was the best of us, and he graced our college. Like so many of you here, we loved him and we miss him.

The programme today is designed to celebrate James's time at Harrow and at Wadham, his contributions as a teacher, a classicist, an inspiration and a friend.

A distinctive quality was his commitment to drama, music, and especially opera: these were things that could be enjoyed with others, and all the better when the performers were students and friends.

His encouragement and continuing support of musicians and actors is marked today by the readings we shall hear from three of his students, and the music played by others he taught.

At the end there will be some recorded music, three contemplative minutes from *Capriccio*, and then something from Verdi: as these play, do rise, and if you would like, do come to Wadham for some tea, and no doubt for some further shared recollections of this gem of a man.