

Victor Watson CBE DL

Personal details

This is merely a brief summary of the achievements of a man who has dedicated himself to the City of Leeds – it is time that the City marked his incomparable contribution.

Born on 26 September 1928, the son of Norman Victor and Ruby Ernestine Watson, Victor Hugo Watson was educated at Moorlands School, Leeds Bootham School, York and Clare College, Cambridge. In 1952 he married Sheila May Bryan, by whom he has two daughters and five grandchildren. He served in the Royal Engineers after World War II reaching the rank of 2nd Lieutenant.

In 1951, he joined John Waddington Ltd and was its Chairman from 1977 until his retirement in 1993. John Waddington is the company which made the board game Monopoly which Victor played a major role in helping to develop.

Directorships/Presidencies

- He is President of Print Yorkshire, an organisation founded by Yorkshire Forward in 2003 and now supported by the BPIF
- He is past president of the Royal Warrant Holders Association, the Institute of Packaging, the British Printing Industrial Federation
- He was President of the Leeds Chamber of Commerce before becoming Chairman
- He was actively involved in the Leeds Training and Enterprise Council from its inception and also was Chairman of Leeds Business Link and of the Leeds Chamber of Commerce
- He was a Director of Yorkshire Television plc, John Foster plc and Stylo plc.
- He was a Director of the Leeds and Holbeck Building Society from 1986 to 1999 and served as its President between 1989 and 1991. He was a director of Topps Tiles plc
- He was a consultant with Thorpe Park Developments Ltd.
- He was on the Court and Council of the University of Leeds
- He was Chairman of Governors of Gateways School for 25 years and he is still a Governor there.
- For many years he was Chairman and the President of West Riding Opera (still going strong – the Carriage Works)

Awards

- He was awarded an Honorary Degree, Doctor of Laws, by the University of Leeds in July 1994 and an Honorary Degree, Doctor of the University by Leeds Metropolitan University in 2001.
- He became a Deputy Lieutenant of West Yorkshire in 1991
- He was awarded the CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in June 1987
- He was High Sheriff during the year 1989 – 90
- Former winner of Achievement Awards, Yorkshire Business Awards. December 2005 he was given a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Yorkshire Business Awards

Charitable and Other

- He is on the executive committee of the Leeds International Pianoforte Competition and is a Vice President of Leeds Symphony Orchestra
- He has been a trustee of Martin House Hospice since July 1999 and was President of the Northern Division of Mencap. He is Chairman of Bootham School Trust and a governor of Gateways School.
- He is a golfer (at Moortown and Alwoodley), sailor, walker, music lover and collector of antique maps.
- There is no doubt that Victor has committed a great deal of his personal and professional life to both business and other interests in Leeds. When with John Waddington he helped fight off two hostile takeover bids from newspaper tycoon Robert Maxwell. He has held a plethora of positions in business, voluntary and charity organisations.

Not many people know that he wrote, produced and participated in the Linton Village Hall pantomime for some years in such offerings as Alice in Blunderland, Aladdin Boots, Robin Hood and his Merry Man!

He is recognized as one of the best after-dinner speakers in Yorkshire. He says he is the proponent of Watson's Law "One man's subsidy is another man's tax" and he had it printed on a scroll in 4 languages and sent it to all the EU Commissioners. He got a reply from three of them, all agreeing!

When receiving an award for the Yorkshire Post Lifetime Achievements he said, "there is always hope, there is always a future. The secret of happiness is someone to love, something to do, something to look forward to and good friends to be with at all times".

In July 2007 he was also awarded the first ever BPIF President's Award for Life Time Contribution to the Printing Industry. His autobiography, "The Waddingtons Story" published in 2008 is a right riveting read that sets out the extraordinary story of his life and his pioneering in technology and commerce.

http://www.amazon.co.uk/Waddingtons-Story-Monopoly-Maxwell-Millennium/dp/1906600368#reader_1906600368

Victor's contribution to the City of Leeds, its institutions, its industry and its charities is beyond comparison. This short collection of headlines is woefully short of the full story with initiatives like the bringing of the Royal Armouries to Leeds being facilitated through his leadership. The respect with which he is held as the father of the printing industry, long time guide to the Chamber of Commerce and a genuine pillar of society.

Victor Watson is an exceptional man whose contribution needs to be properly marked – his rightful place is on the roll of honour in the Banqueting Hall at Leeds Civic Hall among his peers and historic equals – Honorary Freeman of the City of Leeds.