

Dr Monnica Stewart 1924-2004

Tributes have been pouring in for much admired Association Visitor Dr Monnica Stewart who died on October 14th while recovering from major heart surgery.

Local MNDA Branch Chair Margaret Moss described her as a wonderful "prompter", who, in so many ways, held the MNDA Reading and West Berkshire branch together.

She said: "Monnica made such a valuable contribution to the branch as an Association Visitor as she kindly and determinedly helped those people living with MND to secure the help they needed (and were entitled to) from the statutory services. Her care of and support to them and to the branch was immeasurable."

Monnica joined the branch eleven years ago and probably influenced branch policy more than anyone else.

She had joined the charity earlier in North West London after a friend and former colleague in that area developed MND.

Lady Halifax, president of the MND Association and fellow Association Visitor, paid tribute to Monnica's tireless work for the charity.

She said: "I met Monnica when we were both invited to attend a meeting in order to help support the local branch. Later we both trained as visitors and she took on the major role of visiting people living with the disease in the Hungerford and Newbury area.

"She was not only an outstanding visitor who understood the traumas and worries of the carer as well as the moods of the person affected by the progression of the disease but also understood the

way the NHS and Social Services worked.

"She was a remarkable friend to so many and I know was like a mother to one particular carer in desperate need of support."

The MND Association was only one facet of Monnica's life of huge achievement.

Vicar of Kintbury, the Rev Sally Welch, reminded mourners of how the former geriatrician had worked to get access and other improvements for disabled people at the church.

She said Monnica, who achieved so much and loved her community, had left a permanent and tangible mark for the good of the village. A service on October 31st planned to mark the completion of work at the church also included a celebration of Monnica's life.

Her friend and Kintbury churchwarden Jane Goodenough said: "She is going to be a great loss as a friend and also to the Church.

Professor of the Inclusive Environment at the University of Reading Keith Bright said that Monnica was an amazing person.

"I shall miss her greatly. She was interested in how things could be made better, and her advice was always intelligent."

John Holt, from the West Berkshire Neurological Alliance, said: "It's a great loss to the voluntary sector.

"She was present at the meeting which led to the alliance being set up in January 1999. "She always had something pertinent to say and contribute."

Monnica, who had personal experience of long term disablement, was also a trustee of a group called Is There An Accessible Loo (ITAAL) and was involved in Kintbury Patients' Participation Group.

After her funeral mourners were able to read "Thoughts and Snippets About My Aunt Monnica", written by her nephew Graham.



Graham Stewart with "Aunt Monnica". His "Thoughts and Snippets" shed more light on this remarkable woman.

Many discovered that in 1968 Monnica wrote a book which brought geriatrics out into the open instead of allowing it to be pushed away into the forgotten shadows of the medical world. It was a prophecy for our current society.

Graham's thoughts also revealed that Monnica was the aunt with three names – Monnica, Susie or Merin .

He added: "I always liked to think that she had three names, one body and the energy of three people"

THE MONNICA STEWART NEURO NURSE APPEAL

Please support this appeal, which we have dedicated to Monnica, who was the driving force behind it. More details on page 3 of the Newsletter