

## **Joe Medhurst could be considered the ‘father’ of community use of university sports facilities.**

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Teacher and traveller Joe Medhurst, a former head boy at Gateway Boys' School, Leicester, in the 1950's, died at the end of last month, aged 73

After leaving school, Joe studied physical education and geography at Birmingham University, gaining a BA degree, after which he went on to Loughborough College to gain his diploma.

He went on to teach at schools in Birmingham and then East Retford. In 1964, he became Director of Physical Education, at Lancaster University, and headed a project to build a swimming pool which would be self funded by being open to the whole community.

During his lifetime, Joe travelled far and wide and did a lot of charity work, especially for the people of Albania. He married his second wife, Heather, while they were discovering the people and places in Albania.

For the past 14 years, Joe and Heather lived in Hong Kong during English winter where Heather taught young children.

During this time, they received many visitors as it was an ideal stop-off point when travelling to Australia or New Zealand. Joe became an expert guide to all the interesting places to visit, and always made it exciting.

In his younger days, Joe was a keen footballer and played for Oadby Town and Leicester City A Team. He remained an avid reader of the Mercury and an occasional contributor to this page.

He leaves his wife Heather, four children and 11 grandchildren.

Lancaster University, 1 December 2011

### ***Grand opening of the sports centre***

The official opening of the new Sports Centre took place on 17 November 2011. Guests arrived by car, or perilously over the pedestrian crossing, and found themselves inside a building with a large swimming pool immediately to the right, and the fabled climbing wall to the left. They were given guided tours, including to the multi-purpose sports hall, changing rooms and exercise rooms on ground and first floors, and then there were the speeches. **The death of Joe Medhurst, the director of the first Indoor Recreation Centre and a man passionate about diversifying sports activities and making them accessible to the community, had occurred less than a month before.** It was therefore fitting that the day was in part in his memory, as well as about congratulations to Kim Montgomery and her staff for their hard work - for, notwithstanding the critical comments of a user (see subtext 79), their input cannot be faulted. Jason Queally was the undoubted star of the speakers, drawing on his personal recollections of the original IRC and the crucial friendships and support he had found there, and concluding with the reflection that the new centre 'will bring people together and change their lives in ways we can only imagine'. As people left, shouts and cheers arose from a great crowd of small children from local schools, taking part in the first swimming gala of the centre - perhaps with a Jason Queally or Chris Bonington in their midst?