A TRIBUTE

John (Sean) Short

From Neil Walden ¦ 8/9/2026

Dear All. Sean's funeral last Friday was a very moving occasion. St Mary's Catholic church in Hexham was full to over-flowing: not a seat was to be had.

Sean was a proud and well-known member of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Rugby Hall of Fame since 2017. About a fifth of those present at his funeral were obviously rugby players: proud physiques, club ties, blazers with ribbons along the seams, chests with embroidered coloured gold and silver club badges, etc. The teams certainly turned out for Sean.

The funeral will be available online for some time at:

[04/09/26] - Requiem Mass at St Mary's Catholic Church, Hexham.

I knew very little about Hexham. I now know it is an ancient wealthy Northumberland wool town (at one time the capital of Hexhamshire), with fascinating buildings, great rural scenery and lovely people. It is very well connected by rail to the rest of Britain. I recommend it for a few days holiday, away from many of the stresses of modern life.

Others knew him as "Big John". Those of us at Stirling university, 1967 to 1971, knew him as "Sean": a very tall (6 feet 4 inches), quiet, calm, honest, friendly, helpful man whom all the girls fell in love with because he was gentle and simply special. He was also our very first President of the Sports Union (1968 to 1970). He devoted half of his time as a student to this administrative role. In this, he

laid the foundations for Stirling's later sports successes, and we owe him a great deal. As a student he sat on the appointment committee for the first Sport member of staff, Ian Thomson. This would never have happened in one of the ancient Scottish universities. Sport thus got off to a flying start at Stirling, and has never looked back.

Sean went on after applied postgraduate research at Lancaster, Aberdeen and Durham, to form his own economics consultancy, and work for 50 years in 62 countries, (alphabetically: from Argentina to Zimbabwe). He would send me emails saying things like "Greetings from where the White Nile meets the Blue Nile". All this is recorded in the book he wrote during the Covid lock-in when he claimed to have nothing else to do:

"Applied Economics: Public Financial Management and Development. 60 countries and 50 years of experience." Austin Macauley Publishers, 2022, ISBN 9781 398444683.

I had the privilege of proof-reading the book for him. It details each consultancy visit to every country.

No-one else had such a personal international impact as Sean. He was so involved in countries with coups, revolutions or disasters that some people claimed he was an international spy, the James Bond of economics. However, as his son said at the funeral: he was not a secret spy, he was in fact a secret priest. A friend to all, an advisor or mentor to many, an enemy of none.

I know of no one who completed his mission in life as thoroughly as John (Sean) Short ¦ 1948-2026.

Yours. Wal.