

DR GORDON SHAW LLB, FCII, MBIM

Derrick Cole

Gordon Shaw, who died suddenly on 3 December 1999 at the age of 84, was a larger than life character. He had a commanding voice and no one in his presence could ignore his forthright arguments, always presented with great sincerity and knowledge.

BILA will be forever in his debt as it was he and the late Hugh Cockerell who founded this Association in a taxi on a rainy day in the early 1960s. It was therefore natural that Gordon became BILA's first Chairman and Hugh, Vice Chairman, in 1964. His support as a Life Vice President continued throughout his life. Sadly he died only a few days before he was due to attend the President's Lunch on 9 December 1999. Over the years Gordon saw his original idea grow to encompass members from all sections of the insurance industry and the legal world where there is an interest in insurance contract law, resulting in the vibrant organisation it is today.

Following his father, Gordon joined the Alliance (later to be Sun Alliance and more recently Royal Sun Alliance) as a clerk in 1936, returning to the company after serving during the last war with the Royal Artillery. He became an Inspector and later Assistant Manager of the Law Courts Branch. After 32 years service, he became Manager of the Liverpool Branch of brokers Hogg Robinson, ending his career as Managing Director of their Life & Pensions Division. A Fellow of the Chartered Insurance Institute, Gordon was called to the Bar at Gray's Inn, and obtained his Doctorate at the ripe old age of 80 at Cardiff University, where his tutor was Professor Rob Merkin.

A keen sportsman and an aggressive golfer, Gordon became Captain of Gray's Inn Golfing Society. His first book, in 1979, *Insurance Broking and Agency*, which was co-authored with Hugh Cockerell, became the bible to those involved in the law of intermediaries. His second book, only recently published in 1995, *The Lloyd's Broker*, is a major contribution to insurance law and includes many anecdotes from his own experiences in the market. (It was a joint winner of the BILA Book Prize in 1996.)

When he retired, Gordon took up expert witness work and was the founder of a network of insurance experts known as Gordon Shaw Associated Insurance Experts (later shortened to Associated Insurance Experts). His performance in the witness box had to be experienced to understand how impressive it was. I well remember being present in a broker negligence case in the High Court, when Gordon reminded the judge of Lord Denning's comments in another case, that: "one single act of inadvertence does not necessarily amount to negligence". The judge responded by thanking Mr Shaw for reminding him of that important comment from such an eminent authority.

Gordon served AIDA (BILA's parent organisation) on the Presidential Council for many years and was made an Honorary President in 1997. He also chaired the Insurance Section of the American Bar Association. The fact that Dick Kennedy (a Presidential Council Member and an old friend) flew in from the USA to attend Gordon's funeral on a day's notice is evidence of the high esteem in which he was held across the pond.

Gordon had high standards coupled with a tenacity and determination which was the envy of many of his colleagues and friends. We shall all miss his presence and his wise counsel. He is survived by his wife Angela, his son David, a solicitor, and his grandchildren.