

Dear Paul:

Thanks so much for reaching out - the sad news also came through from Chris Johnson.

It was tragic that your father's last years were so terribly difficult - and while his loss will be hard to take, I am sure you are right that it is a blessing he has to suffer no longer. I send my deepest sympathies to you and all the Heywood family.

I also want you to know how grateful I am for all that your father did for me. Vernon was a huge influence on so many of us who passed through the Department of Botany at Reading during his time at the helm.

I was attracted to Reading in the first place because of its broad range of field oriented work - including in the Mediterranean region - and in the end I spent nine years there (1972-1981) - first as an undergraduate, then as a PhD student, and most significantly as a three-year "stand-in" for your father - teaching his classes during his time as Dean of Science.

So your father not only awarded me my PhD fellowship - and presided over my external exam - but he also gave me my first real job. I will be forever grateful for his help to get on that first rung of the ladder. Those nine years at Reading established the foundation upon which my whole career has been built. And those three years of intense teaching were an especially pivotal experience for me.

We all learned so much from just observing your father at close quarters over those Reading years. His intellect, his sophistication, his ambition, and his flair for organization. He influenced not only our science, but also our whole approach to how science could be done. It was inspiring. His written output was also prodigious and impactful - far beyond that of a 'normal' academic.

And I have special personal affection for his book with Peter Davis. "Principles of Angiosperm Taxonomy" is a true classic - still full of wisdom after all these years. I pulled my copy off the shelf last night - I noted inside that I bought it in 1975 with money that my aunts and uncles gave me for my 21st birthday! It was been with me ever since.

It was such a pleasure to be able to spend some time with your father at the Botanical Congress in Shenzhen in 2017 - and then again at a Reading reunion - I think in 2018. It was a good opportunity for him to hear how much he meant to so many of us. For me, he will always be remembered as a remarkable scholar and academic leader - as well as a key supporter at a critical moment. I will be forever grateful.

With warmest good wishes to you and your brothers - and your families. I send my

sympathies to you all.

Sincerely

Peter