

IN MEMORY OF DAVID MCKENNA – 1958 - 2015

A TRIBUTE FROM VICTIM SUPPORT EUROPE

David McKenna was well known for his substantial contribution to the field of victim support services in Scotland. His work there began in 1986 and led eventually to the Victim Support Scotland organisation that we know today.

For Victim Support Europe, his leadership came first as its Secretary and then subsequently as Vice-President and finally in 2010 as President. Throughout that time, he was passionate about improving the situation of victims across Europe. He tirelessly strove to strengthen Victim Support Europe and help it become the leading European organisation on victims' rights.

Through his vision he steered VSE to become a major partner in the development of EU victims' legislation. Under his leadership, Victim Support Europe's views were closely listened to and heeded; victims' issues became a top priority. With an astute understanding of European politics, he gained the ear of senior politicians, European Commissioners, government ministers and the civil servants responsible for writing and negotiating European legislation for victims.

David was able, through his extensive knowledge of victims' issues, to provide a wealth of information crucial to the shaping of the European Directive on victims' rights. That Directive today is not only influencing the development of victims' policy in Scotland but is fundamentally changing the victims' landscape in many EU countries which are only just starting their journey towards full victims' rights.

Yet it was perhaps not his detailed knowledge of facts, problems, laws and needs which had the greatest influence, but his genuine passion for victims and for their cause. Anyone he spoke to on the issue would inevitably be drawn in, by human example after human example and by his frustration, anger and empathy for the injustices and suffering they experienced. Through that passion, David was able to connect with people, and connect them with the cause. More than any facts, he was able to help people understand and feel the situation that victims were faced with. David truly gave a voice to the millions of victims who go unheard every year.

His vision for Victim Support Europe led to it establishing a permanent office in Brussels and taking on its first staff member. His legacy is an organisation which is growing from strength to strength - able now to continue the lobbying and advocacy which David did so well, but also to deliver new services not only for European institutions but increasingly for victim support organisations and victims themselves. As David did, we will continue to strive for change, to improve laws and practices, to make victims' lives better. We will strive to ensure that the laws he helped introduce become a reality in every country in the European Union. We will continue to develop VSE, as David did, to increase its size, deepen its expertise and broaden its impact.

David's commitment to victims was not limited by national or European boundaries. His dedication to helping victims drove him to pursue the establishment of an international community of victim support organisations. His tireless commitment led to the creation of Victims of Crime International, incorporating victim organisations from around the world. His devotion to victims across the globe

has opened new gateways to international co-operation and to genuine change in many more countries. VSE will continue David's work and commitment to international victims' rights and to the development of VOCl.

David was a wonderful leader of Victim Support Europe and he was much more. He was great friend to us all, a raconteur who would regale us with a seemingly endless list of stories and anecdotes that would leave us in tears of laughter one minute and in tears of sympathy the next for those whose rights he fought for. He stood ever ready to help, to look for solutions, to always seek the best for everyone. David will be sorely missed by us all and by the European and international victim support community as a whole.