

TRIBUTE TO JOHN PURVIS CBE BY JIMMY PROVAN

I was honoured to be invited to John's private family funeral on 1st April.

Roweena and I have been friends of John and Louise since the mid 1960s and indeed John blamed me for first suggesting to him that he should stand for the EP in 1979.

And of course, John went on to be a hugely successful Member having been an international banker in New York and then Rome for several years. He gained great recognition in the Parliament especially on Economic and Monetary affairs and a wonderful compliment was paid to him at the final session of the EP in 2009, when the Commissioner for the Internal Market and Services wound up in his valedictory statement saying:

“Finally, may I, too, join with the President (of the Commission) in wishing those Members who are retiring well in their future careers, whatever they might be. I have known most of them in some capacity or other in my five years here and I appreciate their contributions, even though I have not always agreed with them. I suppose I should not single out any one person, but I would like to make special mention of Mr Purvis in this regard. I always found his advice to be wise, measured, considered and not dogmatic, and I wish him, in particular, a very successful future”. I am glad that I was listening in to the EP at the time.

Sadly, John has now passed on and I have to say that I have not been to such an emotional funeral since that of my father 40 years ago. As many of you will know John started the EP Prayer breakfast which met every session and has now spread widely across the Union. His funeral service magnified his deep Christian Faith and his deep devotion to family involvement, as all his three Children were magnificent in their individual Homilies. Louise was truly remarkably composed throughout having not only lost John, her husband of 58 years, a few days earlier but also the loss of her twin brother three weeks earlier.

John's brain tumour was diagnosed last September and it was only about six weeks ago that real deterioration set in. He kept his dedication to the EU up to the end and I had the privilege of talking to him regularly over the last couple of weeks as he wanted to know what was happening in the EU and in the UK. I was fortunate to speak to him twice in his last week, and again on the Saturday afternoon before he died, unfortunately he could not speak by that time, and he died on the Sunday morning 27th March.

He will be greatly missed by the European Movement in Scotland.