

Obituary

James Adams 1943–2021

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The Classics community will be much poorer as a result of the death of James Adams on Monday October 11th, 2021. Jim was undoubtedly the world's most distinguished scholar of the Latin language. His books include *Bilingualism and the Latin Language* (CUP 2003), *Social Variation and the Latin Language* (CUP 2013) and *Asyndeton and its Interpretation in Latin Literature* (CUP 2021), to name only a small selection of his incredibly detailed and learned works.

Among the honours bestowed on him were the Fellowship of the British Academy (1992), Honorary Fellowship of the Australian Academy of the Humanities (2002) and Membership of the Academia Europaea (2007). In 2015 he was made a Companion of the British Empire (CBE) for his service to Classical Studies.

Jim had held professorships at Manchester and Reading Universities, and since 1998 was Senior Research Fellow at All Souls' College, Oxford, and from 2010 held the title of Emeritus Fellow at the same prestigious institution.

This extraordinary career began with Latin classes at North Sydney Boys' High School, from which he topped the state in Latin in the Leaving Certificate of 1960. He added Greek to his studies at

the University of Sydney, and completed his Arts degree with the University Medal in Latin in 1965. The Commonwealth Scholarship he won took him to Oxford where he was awarded his doctorate in 1970.

Jim Adams was a thoroughly decent, modest bloke who never lost his Australian accent, despite never returning to his country of origin. He used his time unstintingly to help young scholars, with a soft spot for later alumni from NSBHS who also pursued a career in Classics. He was very proud of his high school and later donated a prize for excellence in Classics. Jim was consistently helpful and totally without any trace of academic snobbery. He even showed an interest in current trends in Classics pedagogy at school level. No matter what linguistic issue one raised with him (e.g. Australian indigenous languages) he never failed to have read about it, to know an expert in it, and to put one in touch with that expert.

It was a privilege to be his friend from undergraduate days, and to enjoy his company and to taste a little of his knowledge on my occasional visits to Oxford. He was always a generous host, even overly solicitous about my safety in walking home alone through Oxford's main streets in the early evening. *Ave atque vale*, Jim!

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