

Sir William Allan Davis GBE CA 1921 to 1994



President of the Ward Club 1977 to 1991 - Lord Mayor of London 1985 to 1986

Based on the Obituaries from The Times 24 August 1994 & Daily Telegraph 25 August 1994

Sir Allan Davis, GBE, an accountant and former Lord Mayor of London who took "service with a smile" as the theme of his mayoralty, died on August 14 aged 73. He was born on 19 June 1921.

William Allan Davis was a patient, kindly man who exercised a calming influence on those around him, and devoted much of his time and energy to public and charitable service. As Lord Mayor from 1985 to 1986, he travelled extensively to promote British interests abroad, did much to encourage youth enterprise schemes and took a special interest in Research into Ageing. He was considered generally to have been one of the most successful and highly regarded Lord Mayors of London for many years. His service to the City in a variety of capacities was impressive.

Although personally modest and unassuming, he took pride in the pageantry with which the Mansion House welcomed the King of Spain, the Emir of Qatar and President Richard von Weizsäcker of Germany, each of whom decorated him with orders of merit of chivalry.

A bank manager's son, William Allan Davis was born at Ealing on June 19 1921 and educated at the Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School, Kensington.

The outbreak of the Second World War prevented him from taking a place at Guy's Hospital to study dentistry, and in 1940 he volunteered for the Navy, training as a pilot and serving on Naval Air Stations in Trinidad and Scotland. He was invalided out in 1944. Also in 1944 he married Pamela Louch. They had two sons and a daughter.

He then entered the accountancy firm of Dunn Wylie, and was senior partner from 1972 until its merger in 1976 with Armitage & Norton. He was senior partner of the merged firm from 1979 until 1986 and a director of many other businesses, including Fiat Auto (UK) and the Catholic Herald newspaper.

Davis's service to the City of London began in the late 1950's when he became Honorary Auditor to the Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers. He was later a Liveryman, Honorary Treasurer, and Upper Warden, and would have succeeded as Master next year (1995).

He represented the Ward of Queenhithe on the City Common Council from 1971 and later was the Alderman for the Ward of Cripplegate.

He was chairman of the Port and City of London, Health and Social Services Committee and became a Sheriff of the City in 1982. By tradition, the Lord Mayor of London has to be an Alderman and to have served previously as Sheriff. For a variety of reasons the field of choice became dangerously limited and in 1982 the unprecedented step was taken of passing over the lay Sheriff and appointing two Aldermen as Sheriffs for the year. The decision was much resented by those who had an eye on the office of lay Sheriff and there might have been serious repercussions if the usurping second Alderman had been anyone other than Allan Davis. He was so much admired and respected that the storm subsided quickly and his choice to serve with Alderman Alan Traill was widely approved. Each became Lord Mayor, Traill in 1984-85 and Davis in 1985-86. On taking office, Allan Davis was created GBE.

He was President of Cripplegate Ward Club until his death, chairman of the Cripplegate Foundation and of the City of London St John's Ambulance Association, a trustee of Bart's, a governor of the Cardinal Vaughan Memorial and Lady Eleanor Holles Schools, and a trustee of Sir John Soane's Museum.

Among the various charities he supported, Davis was for ten years a trustee chairman and vice-president of Research into Ageing. Tall and distinguished in appearance and softly spoken in manner, he remained devoutly faithful to the Roman Catholic Church and enjoyed the admiration of a host of friends. He was a diabetic and had a heart problem and for the last few years his health had deteriorated. Recently however, he had appeared to make a good recovery. He is survived by his wife, their two sons and their daughter.