

OBITUARY: GRAHAM DICKASON

(1936-2020) by Sue Gordon



Graham Dickason outside the Seven Fountains Methodist Church, after the Bicentennial service he organised on 27 September 2020. He stands next to the Norman family commemorative plaque, erected in 1959 by Norman-Emslie descendants. (Photo: Sue Gordon)

Graham was born in Johannesburg in 1936, attended Jeppe Boys High, worked in Foreign Audit, Rhodesia Railways, Bulawayo (1954-1957) and then went to London (1957-1960) where he worked for a private merchant bank. On his return he became PA to the Mining Director and an Investment Analyst at JCI (1960-1967). He was General Manager of MPF Investment, the mining industry pension fund (1967-1998) and was Chairman and co-founder of City Lodge Hotels, 1985-1994.

Graham held several directorships from the 1980s through to 1998 in banking and property companies.

Besides following a very successful business career, he pursued a wide range of interests, including investment markets, socio-political affairs, the performing arts, cinema, reading and writing of the history of southern Africa, indigenous gardening,

genealogy and vintage and veteran motor cars. His play *The Train stops at Alicedale*, was performed at the National Arts Festival, Grahamstown, in June 2003.

He wrote

The Irish Settlers to the Cape, A.A. Balkema, Cape Town, 1973.

Cornish Immigrants to South Africa, A.A. Balkema, Cape Town, 1978.

The Dickason Family in South Africa, DFSA Publications, CapeTown,2003.

He also contributed to several genealogical and historical Journals and was a generous sponsor of the Lower Albany Historical Society for many years, serving as its President (2013-2014).

In November 2007, a group of 50 LAHS members had a memorable outing to Seven Fountains. Graham prepared a comprehensive programme with extensive background information, and also involved the local residents and invited councillors from the Makana Municipality to address us.

Graham collected data over a period of thirty years from all members of the Dickason family and published it for a Family Reunion held in April 2003, at the site of the original land allotment made in 1820. The book, *The Dickason Family in South Africa* has been reprinted twice since then. It also contains genealogical data on the branch of the family that emigrated to Argentina in 1908. Graham visited these descendants in Comodoro Rivadavia and Sarmiento in February 2006. Many valuable photographs were thus made available and included in a revised book (Graham Dickason, Cape Town, 3 June 2006) <https://gw.geneanet.org/gdic?lang=en&n=dickason&oc=0&p=graham+brian>

□ Graham Brian Dickason

Graham's death in November 2020 was followed a few months later by the passing of his long-time companion and partner, Percy Tucker, who launched 'Computicket' in 1971 - the first electronic theatre booking system in the world.

A tribute from a member of the family:

'In the late nineties, we started receiving correspondence from him. Pictures, documents, books...Graham wanted to inform us that we were family. He was quick to make all those years of hard work and family research available. We were invited to contribute with the investigation as if the work was ours. He was specially gifted when it came down to making people feel included, important, loved. His generosity knew no boundaries.

We met for the first time in Comodoro Rivadavia, Argentina in 2006. His visit went by so fast, in between family gatherings and little excursions. When he left Patagonia he no longer needed a family tree to state his case; it was palpable, we were family. Exactly 10 years later he made sure I knew this, while remembering his last visit to Argentina. He said: "When we met you, we felt like we'd known you forever". I told him the feeling was mutual.

Graham was a man of very few words. ..but shared with us his passion, his life-long work. We now know where we come from, who our ancestors were, in fine detail. He united the family from all across the globe. It is our duty and pleasure to carry on with his legacy.'

Becky Dickason