

GEOFFREY CRAGGS

Healer's business skills guided our charities

FOR THOSE of us who knew him well, Geoffrey Cragg's name was synonymous with both Spiritualism and charity. So it was almost inevitable that the one-time businessman, who passed on 11 May at the age of 85, was closely associated with the Spiritual Truth Foundation (STF) for many years.

The chartered accountant's passion for helping others – humans and animals – was channelled in a number of ways, including holding office in Spiritualist organisations, giving healing at the London Spiritual Mission (LSM), where his wife Vivien, who passed in 2012, was the organist. He also became the company secretary of the Spiritual Truth Foundation (STF).

In that capacity, he played a key role in negotiating the transfer of ownership of *Psychic News* from the STF to the Spiritualists' National Union in 1995.

His combination of business acumen and compassionate spirituality led the Greater World Christian Spiritualist League to spot his potential much earlier. In 1980, when he was a globe-trotting corporate trouble-shooter working for a large industrial conglomerate, they appointed him as a vice-president.

Two years later, he became the Greater World's treasurer. He and Vivien were also great friends and supporters of Fred and Nora Moor who ran a shelter in Leeds, Yorkshire, for homeless women and

children on behalf of the Greater World.

In an interview with *Psychic News* in 1980 he expressed some forthright views on the problems facing Spiritualism. "Churches exist primarily for the passer-by, the first-time visitor," he told our reporter. "If the building they enter is old, dilapidated and uncared for, who can blame them for rejecting what goes on inside?"

After moving south, he and Vivien began their 30-year association with the LSM and Geoffrey also became the chief administrator of the Spiritual Truth Foundation. Dealing with everything from assessing and responding to requests for financial assistance from individual Spiritualists who had fallen on hard times or churches needing help, to drawing up contracts with overseas publishers seeking

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Geoffrey Craggs (Photo: Roy Stemman)



to spread the teachings of Silver Birch – the copyright of which is owned by the charity – in their own language.

Although he never sought the limelight, on his retirement as STF Secretary last year his fellow trustees ensured his hard work and dedication would not be forgotten. They established The Geoffrey Craggs Award and announced that each year a complete set of Silver Birch books, worth well over £100, will be presented to an outstanding Spiritualist student of mediumship, healing, philosophical speaking or pastoral work.

That recognition would have delighted Geoffrey, but for him the greatest reward will have been his reunion with Vivien in the next world.

His funeral will be held on 7 June, in Surrey, and the London Spiritual Mission is also planning a celebration of the couple's lives and the dedicated service they gave to the church. ■



Geoffrey Craggs (left) with John and Molly Smith of the USM Benevolent Fund which became part of the Spiritual Truth Foundation (Photo: Roy Stemman)