

# Hearts Mourn Passing of Former Director

Former Hearts Director Robert Wilson has died after a long illness. Hearts owner Ann Budge paid this tribute on the official Hearts website:

*Midway through Saturday's game against Inverness CT, I received the very sad news that Robert Wilson, a lifelong Hearts supporter, had passed away after a long and tremendously brave battle against Motor Neuron Disease. For the rest of the game I thought about how he would have loved the performance by the team on Saturday, and about how much the 16,000 supporters at the game owed to Robert.*

*In 2011, during a conversation with a mutual friend and business colleague, I mentioned that I wanted someone to work with me in helping the Foundation of Hearts to develop a strategy which would see the supporters taking over the club from the then owners. This friend immediately said: "Why don't you ask Robert?" He explained that Robert had been diagnosed with MND and had taken early retirement to allow him to spend more time with his family. Anyone who knows this cruel illness knows that while it affects motor skills – gradually impacting the use of arms, legs and ultimately speech – it does not affect the brain...and Robert had one of the sharpest brains and brightest intellects of anyone I know...and he was a huge Hearts fan. Not only that...he knew football...having been instrumental in setting up the SPL and indeed being its first Chairman.*

*I immediately contacted Robert, explained what we were trying to do with FoH and asked him to join us. From that point on he became one of the main driving forces behind FoH. He became my closest confidante, helping us to develop the strategy and indeed helping us put together the financial plan that would lead to the success of the BIDCO/FoH offer.*

*When BIDCO took control of the club, I had absolutely no hesitation in inviting Robert to join the Hearts board as a non-executive director and was delighted when he accepted.*

*His style was direct...he said things as he saw them...he was always challenging...in short, in the same way as he had challenged the FoH Directors in the preceding years, he challenged us, the new Hearts board...and we all benefitted from that.*

*His contribution to the success of FoH and indeed to the rebuilding of Hearts...the club he loved...should never be underestimated. For as long as he was physically able he came to matches, played his part in hosting guests in the Directors' Suite and then watched the games from the control room. When he felt he could no longer do that he continued to come to games with his grandson and other family members.*

*On behalf of myself, and everyone here at the club and at FoH, we thank him. He was respected and admired by all...and will be very sadly missed. Our thoughts are very much with his wonderfully supportive family at this time.*

Hearts also announced they will place a Heart in the Memorial Garden in Mr Wilson's memory. The Edinburgh Reporter offers its condolences to Mr Wilson's family at this sad time.

In other news from Tynecastle, Hearts goalkeeper Jack Hamilton and defender Callum Paterson have been called up to the Scotland squad for the World Cup qualifier in Malta on 4<sup>th</sup> September.

Meanwhile Faycal Rherras has been called up to the Moroccan squad for their forthcoming friendly against Albania and African Cup of Nations tie against Sao Tome and Principe also on 4<sup>th</sup> September.

To complete a day of international recognition at Tynecastle,

midfielder Arnaud Djoum has been called up for Cameroon for their African Cup of Nations tie against Gambia on 3<sup>rd</sup> September and friendly against Algeria on 6<sup>th</sup> September.