

## Alan Rugman

### A Memorial by Mark Casson

Alan was a “*one-off*.” At a time when universities have embraced mass production, and academics all do their best to think alike, Alan was *different*. Whilst others pursued *conformity*, Alan thrived on *controversy*.

He was a *conviction academic*. He wanted to get at the *truth*. For Alan the truth wasn't just a matter of opinion. It was a *gold standard*. Alan collected lots of *data* to find out what was going on. He made his PhD students do the same. Then he analysed the data, and *told* it as he *saw* it.

He was an intellectual: he liked *discussion and debate*. But many academics wouldn't play ball. They weren't interested in public debate, and they didn't want to change their views. Alan got *annoyed* by this. I once said to him ‘Alan, why do you *keep going on* about internalisation theory?’ He replied ‘Mark, you don't understand; there are still *some* people who refuse to *accept* the theory.’

It has to be said, though, that Alan *couldn't always see* the opposite point of view himself. Bernie Wolf from Toronto captured this nicely when he wrote to Helen this week: “Although Alan talked about international business as being mainly *regional*, his friends are truly *spread out all over the globe*.”

Alan was a good organiser – an *academic entrepreneur*, in fact. When he arrived at Reading a few years ago, he told me that he wanted to run the International Business and Strategy group. ‘Why do you want to do that?’ I said. ‘Why don't you just get on with your *own research*?’ But Alan wasn't a lone researcher, he was a *team builder*. Teams require resources and to get resources within a university you need some *power*. Alan got the power and built the team, and the team is here today.

Alan was a very *loyal friend*. I first met him at a conference in Fontainebleau in 1975. We were both young scholars, just turning thirty, trying to make our way in the world. Peter Buckley, another long-time friend of Alan's, was also there, and I'm glad to see that he's also here today. We had some lively discussions, which quickly blossomed into personal friendships.

Alan arranged to spend a year at Reading, and I spent a month with Helen, Andrew and Alan at Dalhousie. I was supposed to be staying in a university residence but I seemed to spend most of my time at their house. When Alan

came to Oxford we spent more time together. I was delighted when Helen and Alan decided to settle in Reading, where they were near to Andrew. Alan and I would meet up in the evenings at the Catherine Wheel in Goring and ruminate together.

Alan's academic stature is obvious from his publications, his citations, and his influential advisory roles. But there's another aspect to this. Alan died at the *height of his powers*. There are all sorts of unfinished projects. Who will represent the international business community to the wider world? Who will entertain us with wit and wisdom at international conferences? Who will maintain the momentum at *Multinational Business Review*, and who will supervise his doctoral students? Who will support Rajneesh at the Dunning Centre? This is not the time to consider these issues. But they underline our *enormous loss*.

In the past week many tributes have been paid to Alan from *all over the world*. I've kept copies of all the e-mails. My personal favourite is from Ram Mudambi. Ram is a *novelist* as well as an international business scholar, and I thought he put it very well:

'Alan was many things – intellectually stimulating, witty, prickly and passionate. But to me his most important characteristics were his kindness, his consideration of others and his *complete honesty*. With Alan, there was no subterfuge. He wore his heart on his sleeve and if he disagreed with you, he told you, bluntly, directly and to your face. If he upset some people, it was because he was usually *right*.'

Alan was indeed many things. For me was a friend for nearly *forty years*, a 'one off', a maverick, and a man of principle. He wasn't afraid to say what other people might be think privately - he wasn't afraid to rock the boat. I will always remember Alan with great affection. He was *unforgettable*; he is also, I fear, *irreplaceable*.