

## **John M. Stopford (1940-2011)**

### **A Memorial by Charles Baden-Fuller**

John Stopford, Professor Emeritus of London Business School, was a man of many talents. He was a great educator who brought outstanding enthusiasm and dedication to the class room: where he sought to explain with cases and up-to date data how companies (and governments) worked and could do better. Yet he was also realistic, his classes often erupted in mirth when he told his students of the follies of managers. He was a great scholar who through his writing and seminars changed the way we think about the multinational enterprise, the relationship between states and firms, and the problems of the mature firm.

He was a very practical man: working with very many famous companies; government ministers and their institutions; and with transnational institutions such as the UN. In taking his ideas to the front line, he used the consulting-seminar mechanism to inform people of the latest thinking, encourage and sometimes goad people to change their perceptions and their actions, always to achieve greater effectiveness. He was a wonderful colleague, especially to his juniors: enthusiastic in seminars and in giving comments on papers. He was an institution builder, he worked hard to ensure the success of his Department and the Centre for Business Strategy, as well as all other things he touched at LBS; and was just as collaborative when he visited other universities. Finally he was a wonderful friend to many of all ages: with a warm heart and great personality; the creator of earnest but witty conversations, with the unlit cigar and glass of wine in some late night bar or hotel lobby long after others had retired to bed.

He was international from the start: born in Sri Lanka in 1940, son of a well known Anglican bishop. He was also multiskilled: When he was 17 he trained as a craft apprentice at the UK engineering company: Baker Perkins before gaining in 1961 a first class degree in engineering at Oxford University and subsequently a Master of Science (S.M) at MIT, during which time he worked on the Saturn I program and published his first academic article. He worked for Royal Dutch Shell in the Netherlands and the UK, and was later managing director of a subsidiary of Booker McConnell in Guyana. He joined the Doctoral program at Harvard in 1965, and briefly taught there before moving to Manchester Business School in 1968 and London Business School in 1971, where he remained and was made emeritus professor in 2002. He was the Harry Reynolds visiting professor at Wharton in 2000, and at various times visiting professor at MIT, Stockholm and Aoyama Gakuin (Tokyo). In

addition he worked as a senior staff member at the United Nations, served as a non-executive director of Shell (UK) Ltd., on various UK committees of enquiry, and as owner/director of several small companies.

John's rich and varied background, coupled with his exacting training at Oxford, MIT and Harvard gave him a base on which to develop and exploit his intellect. He wrote more than 10 books, 40 articles and co edited the famous multinational directory. His most important works were *Managing the Multinational Enterprise* (1972 with Louis Wells) a best seller in the UK and USA; *Rival States and Rival Firms* (1991 with Susan Strange) winner of the book prize at the Academy of Management in 1992; and *Rejuvenating the Mature Business* (1994 with Charles Baden-Fuller) winner of US Choice award, extracted more than 50,000 times in management texts and translated into 5 languages. Each of these books captured a stream of ideas that was subsequently adopted into mainstream thinking in management.

He was elected as one of the 25 Founding Fellows of the Strategic Management Society, and the academy will remember John for his novel contributions to thinking; for his extensive collaboration that allowed him to tap many streams of thinking; and his commitment to the book form of writing where ideas can be given full play. Few have devoted so much effort to the academic cause with such effectiveness.