

A Tribute to Rob Cameron

Rob Cameron passed away on 22 February 2018.

I had known Rob since he was a young student at Victoria University of Wellington and I was one of his University teachers at the postgraduate level. He was an outstanding student.

We had remained good friends ever since that time, including through his periods at The Treasury, CSFB, Fay Richwhite and then his own firm Cameron Partners.

Rob was a highly talented New Zealander who contributed greatly to our society in multiple ways.

He was a leading economist with impeccable credentials ranging from Victoria University of Wellington (which recognised him with their highest award of an Honorary Doctorate) to Harvard University to the prestigious Brookings Institute in the United States.

Of more significance, Rob made a number of path breaking contributions to the economics profession and to Government policymaking in areas as diverse as the thinking underlying the creation of the early state owned enterprises through to the overhaul of our capital markets framework.

He was regarded as one of New Zealand's leading economists.

Rob was an Adviser to successive governments on a number of matters of considerable moment including the restructuring of various government owned commercial enterprises, the implementation of the state owned enterprises strategy, commercial governance arrangements, tax policy, and the development of New Zealand capital markets.

In the private sector Rob created and led very successfully one of the country's leading boutique merchant banks, Cameron Partners. He advised some of New Zealand's major companies as well as playing an important role in the venture capital space.

Rob made a substantial contribution in the voluntary world, including particularly with respect to the Special Olympics, which provides wonderful opportunities for handicapped people to participate in sport at the highest level; the Kea organisation, which encourages expatriate Kiwis to contribute to New Zealand; and in the design of a philanthropic structure based on the venture capital model. In education, he played pivotal roles with respect to Victoria University of Wellington, where he was Treasurer and a Council Member, and as Chairman of the Institute of Competition and Regulation. He also assisted both the University of Auckland and the University of Canterbury in a number of important ways.

In his private life, Rob was a fine family person and one who faced personal health challenges with great courage, splendid spirit and remarkable openness. He helped others through similar challenges.

In summary, Rob was a man of high integrity, great intelligence, considerable creativity, much drive, an enthusiasm for a better New Zealand, and a real leader. He was much liked by those who knew him and those who worked with him. He was generous of spirit and open in sharing widely his ideas and intellect.

Rob Cameron contributed to our society hugely as a policy adviser, commercial leader, outstanding economist, a volunteer who changed things for the better, who was devoted to the causes he espoused, and a great believer in education.

Rob made worthwhile things happen and got things done. He was a real New Zealander. He was also a highly distinguished New Zealander.

For all this he was honoured in 2015 by being made a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit. The Honour was richly deserved.

Sir Roderick Deane

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