

Dad Remembered – Fiona McVey

When I was about 8, someone asked me. What does your dad do? There was a chart on the classroom wall with job titles such as plumber, accountant and builder and I realised then that I didn't have a clue what my father did for a living.

In October 1996 I was at work when I received a phone call from a friend, I was quite surprised when they told me that they had just heard on the radio that my father had won a Nobel prize! Communication was never his strong point and he was a very modest man, so it isn't a surprise that I found out in this way. I am immensely proud of what my father achieved and honoured that he was recognised in such a prestigious way, but one of the best things about him being awarded the Nobel Prize is that at last I found out what he did for a living, after all I could now read about it in the newspapers. I was very impressed.

I grew up to the sound of Sibelius, Schumann, and Wagner, stimulated by art, culture, travel, music and architecture. My father seemed to absorb the contents of books and assimilate knowledge from the world around him and he instilled in me the importance of being interested, not in just one thing, but in everything. I confess I didn't always appreciate it at the time, but now I know how lucky I have been to have had an upbringing that showed me that there are so many worlds to explore. I know that many children reach a point in their lives when they suddenly have a realisation that their parents don't in fact know everything ... well I can't pretend that that ever happened to me. I think my father's knowledge was vast, and more, he had vision. His brain was like a factory for problem solving, constantly analysing and questioning. His motivation was his values and I respected him for that.

My father was a quiet man. At home he would be working in his study, reading, playing the piano or listening to music. On holidays he would like to be out in the hills appreciating the views (or the Scotch mist), taking in art galleries and exploring architecture. He became a great economist but what made him great is something that money cannot buy, the unique qualities of a great thinker. He was contemplative, thoughtful and reflective, attributes that are often not appreciated enough in this information-rich age.

It is even quieter now that he has gone, but I think that in this silence his four grandchildren are his greatest legacy and other great minds will continue to explore his ideas for years to come.