

Alder King remembers 'inspirational' former chairman following death

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Grant Watson OBE, whose career with property consultancy Alder King spanned six decades, has died aged 81.

The company said Mr Watson was “an inspirational leader, mentor and a truly charismatic individual”, who was long recognised as one of Bristol and the South West’s leading surveyors.

Mr Watson joined the firm, then known as Stanley Alder Price, as a trainee surveyor in 1957 before becoming a partner in 1967.

He went on to influence and support development across the region from the 1960s through to the early 2000s.

Mr Watson held the role of senior partner from 1978 to 2003 and was appointed chairman in 2003, continuing to work on a variety of projects well into his 70s for some of his long-standing clients.

Mr Watson also worked for numerous charitable, sporting and community organisations, as well as devoting a huge amount of time and effort to the general business community.

He served as chairman of Newport Unlimited from 2004 to 2011, an urban regeneration company created to help counter the impacts of the decline in heavy industry and manufacturing in the South Wales city.

In the role, he brought together the public and private sectors to help create more than 3,000 full-time jobs and a contribution of £218m towards Newport's economy.

A former chairman of the RICS South West board and president of the Bristol Property Agents Association, he was also master of the Bristol Guild of Guardians; president of Bristol Rotary Club and Clifton Rugby Club; and a trustee for other charities, including SS Great Britain and Coombe Dingle Sports Club.

Mr Watson was recognised for his many achievements in property and business when he was made an OBE in 2012. In 2013 he was awarded an honorary degree from the University of the West of England in recognition of his entrepreneurship and passion for the Bristol region.

Martyn Jones, partner and chair at Alder King, said Mr Watson would be remembered for his "unique blend of fun and inspirational leadership" over a long and successful career.

Mr Jones said: "Grant was a titan of the Bristol and South West property scene. He cared passionately about the region and its prosperity, and leaves a permanent legacy in many of its developments.

"But there was more to Grant than just work. He was a gifted sportsman, captaining Clifton Rugby Club for many years, as well as being an avid and accomplished skier and regular marathon runner.

"Together with his wife Karen, he enjoyed a very active social life, with friends all over the world. He also had a great sense of humour and was a fantastic raconteur.

“All of us at Alder King send our deepest condolences to Karen and sons Guy and Miles.”