

Miss Libby Craig

17 April 1952 – 11 October 2017

President of the I.S.G.A.

Gymnastics Coach, P.E Teacher and until recently, Headmistress of Stamford Junior and Vice-Principal of Stamford Endowed School; Vice-Chair of IAPS; Chair /Ambassador for Sport IAPS.

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am writing this today to tell you that our President, Libby Craig, died unexpectedly, but peacefully at home, with husband Philip, in her sleep yesterday morning.

Libby retired from teaching in July 2012. During the past two years it was discovered after numerous tests, scans and consultations that she had a rare condition known as Multiple System Atrophy (MSA). www.msatrust.org.uk Some of the first symptoms are loss of balance, and lack of coordination, feeling clumsy and dropping things, and slurred speech, leading eventually to increasing deterioration of muscle control. Unfortunately there is no cure for MSA. Richard and I received an email from her shortly after her diagnosis. She described her condition and finished with "the long and short of it is that I will continue to be wobbly (even without a glass or two of wine), but life is very much "business as usual" and I certainly do not want this to become the focus of my existence." This was Libby to a 'T'. In her retirement she had taken on the post of IAPS's Ambassador for Sport, driving her sports car the length and breadth of the UK, encouraging and supporting numerous school sport organisers as they hosted regional and national events. True to form, she continued with this wholeheartedly until she was forced to give up driving and needed to use walking aids, and eventually a wheelchair, to get around at her usual 70 mph!

Libby's passion has always been gymnastics and she has championed competitive school gymnastics throughout her thirty-three years involvement with our association (1984 – 2017), first as a teacher and coach, then becoming ISGA's first Chairman and finally President. Those of us who knew her in any of these capacities admired her wisdom, straight talking, her insight into complex matters, and also her kindness. She gave support, and encouragement to those of us who required it and a firm word if she felt we needed that too!

Libby lived and loved life to the full, right up until the end. Always on the go, meeting different people and finding new adventures to experience. Philip took her on holiday on a train journey travelling across Namibia this summer – pretty good going for a person with balance issues to travel on an African train! She attended the whole of the World Athletics Championships this summer, in London, both Able and Para Games. She rarely sat still for any length of time (an exhausting trait I have found in so many ex Bedford PE College Students; where do you get your energy from?!). She had a huge variety of interests and a wide circle of beloved family, friends and colleagues.



When they married, Libby and Philip set up home in the Northamptonshire countryside. Libby has always loved the great outdoors, for many years riding and looking after horses and walking the dogs. Right to the end she delighted in watching the birds flocking to the feeding table in her garden and glimpsing the country animals.

Libby and Philip also have a house in Canada. At the moment their Canadian neighbours, John and Michelle, are staying with them on holiday here. Philip and Libby returned home on Saturday after a week spent in Scotland showing their visitors the sights. On Sunday they took them to the East of England Show at Peterborough and had possible plans to explore Cambridge yesterday. However, Libby caught a chest infection on Monday and, with her breathing function much weaker because of the MSA, she passed away peacefully during the night - Monday night/Tuesday morning.

Libby leaves behind a remarkable legacy in our world of school gymnastics and also at Stamford Endowed Schools, where she was successively teacher, deputy head, headmistress and vice-principal. Plus of course Philip, her step-daughter Anne and many other family and friends.

Trudy Smith, who is hosting the I.S.G.A. 2 Piece Championships at Stamford in November, was one of Libby's pupils and a gymnast, who then returned to teach at Stamford Junior School. Her daughter Lottie is one of Libby's God-daughters, of whom she was very proud. I am sure that today's news will be difficult for both of them, and Trudy's parents, Glenda and Albert, to bear. The same will be true of Lyn Barrett (ex Housemistress and gymnastics judge), who has been a constant, faithful friend of Libby's for many years and an incredible support to her, especially since the onset of MSA.

Those of you who knew Libby will have your personal memories of her through the years. I am sure she would not like you to be too sad, but rather celebrate the life that she loved, lived, and enjoyed to the full. It had a number of mountain tops and also its valleys, but she took it all in her stride. Like her parents, she had a strong faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. God was her anchor and rock and she drew on the guidance, wisdom and strength of His Holy Spirit. She lived out her faith. She will be sorely missed amongst her local church congregation.

I know that I and a large number of you have been fortunate enough to have counted Libby as our friend, mentor or colleague. We were blessed indeed to have been a part of the tapestry of her life.

With best wishes to you all.

June

June Walden ISGA Chairman
12.10 2017

Note: Representatives of ISGA committee members, judges and gymnasts attended the funeral on 26 October 2017 at Libby's home church in King's Cliffe. A donation of £100 was given by ISGA to charities of Libby's choice.