

Reg Sell November 1929 – December 2022

Reg was once described as one of the “Grand Old Men of Ergonomics” although he once commented that at no stage of his career did he ever have ‘ergonomics’ (or a related word) in his job title.

He graduated with a degree in Psychology from University College London (UCL) in 1953 and then in 1956 completed a Post-Graduate Diploma in Occupational Psychology at Birkbeck College, London. During his long and distinguished career he became a Fellow of the British Psychological Society, the Ergonomics Society (now Chartered Institute) and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. In his latter years he was elected a Life Member of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee, having been its Honorary Secretary from 1993 to 1996. Along the way he has been President, Chair of Council and General Secretary of the Ergonomics Society, as well as Chairing several of its Committees and Working Groups, and has been active in the international arena as General Secretary of the IEA (1973 - 1979), and has been instrumental in setting up ergonomics activities in Europe through CREE and FEES.

Reg, with his tireless determination to improve the quality of working life, was committed to the development of promotion of ergonomics both nationally and internationally. As well as being General Secretary to the IEA, he was centrally involved in the organisation and running of two Triennial Congresses (as Secretary in 1967 and Chairman in 1985). His contribution to European ergonomics became more significant during the establishment of HETPEP (Harmonising European training Programmes for the Ergonomics Profession) from 1985 with Nigel Corlett leading the UK contribution, to set up the standardised European recognition of appropriately and adequately trained practitioners (Eur.Ergs.) which has now evolved to become CREE. Reg was the UK representative on the CREE Council when the first Eur.Ergs. were accredited in 1994 and was, himself, one of the first four Eur.Ergs. in the UK in 1995. Reg continued as the UK representative until 2004 after which he continued to assist the CREE Board with specific assignments. In 2009 he was the first person to receive CREE’s “Outstanding Contributor” award (see photo).

As part of his IEA responsibilities, Reg assisted with the establishment of a European Regional Group of the IEA, FEES (Federation of the European Ergonomics Societies), an initiative led by Pieter Rookmaaker.

Over the course of his successful career in the private and public sectors Reg has made a very substantial contribution to the development of ergonomics primarily as a practitioner but also in an advisory capacity in academia.

Dave O’Neill
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