

We are deeply saddened to report the sudden death of the affable and extremely popular Joe Fee.

We first met Joe in Cookstown Bridge Club in September 1986 he was the long standing TD of the Club. We had played all of our bridge in clubs in and around Belfast and this was our first game in Cookstown. Joe introduced us to everyone and wished us luck. There were seven rule infractions during the evening and we dutifully called Joe for a ruling on each occasion. At the end of the night's bridge, Joe called me over and with a mischievous grin he said " You certainly like the rules, but you have called me more times in one evening than I have been called in the last ten years. We do take our bridge seriously here, but I'm not as young and fit as I used to be and we're all friends here and we tend to use our common sense and sort things amongst ourselves rather than using the rule book."

Words of wisdom from a true maestro of a Tournament Director. No fuss or splutter, he was the epitome of the phrase calm cool and minty. Joe was to become a great friend and confidante over the next thirty years.

Next to Sally and his family, Bridge was Joe's second great love. He was an avid reader of bridge books and new systems with an insatiable thirst to learn about the game and improve not only himself but others. When he would visit his daughter Monica in Belper, near Derby, he would often play in the local club on Friday night. He needed his bridge fix, even on holiday.

Joe formed a formidable partnership with Richard Sutton (RIP) and they travelled to congresses and events all over the country. Nobody who saw them in their bright green Masters jackets at Donegal will ever forget their wicked sense of humour and their appetite for spicy Chinese food.

Joe was one of life's true gentlemen. He always had a kind word for everyone whether at the tables or away from them. Joe was always organising charitable bridge events and teaching bridge classes locally. He will be sadly missed by all his bridge friends, especially those in Cookstown Dungannon and Maghera.

Joe was one of the seven children of his parents Frank and Margaret. He is will be sadly missed by his brothers Tommy, Michael and Frank and his sisters Ann, Sheila and Kath. Born on the 16th November, 1937, Joe was 80 years young when he passed. He was educated at Brockagh primary, St. Patrick's Armagh and QUB where he graduated in Applied Chemistry.

Joe's first love was Sally, a teacher, whom he quickly followed to Hull for his first job with pharmaceutical firm Smith & Nephew. They returned home a few years later to be married in St. Mary & Joseph church in Coalisland on 28th December, 1968. They lived in Cookstown for 8 years before settling in Killen. They had five children, Helen, Carol, Paul, Monica and Joanne. Their 8 grandchildren are Anna, Emma, Louise, James, Aidan, Daniel, Ben and Matthew.

We extend our heartfelt sympathies to all Joe's family and friends. May he rest in peace.

His funeral will take place at St. Patrick's Church, Clonoe at 11.00am on Saturday 20th January, 2018.

John Murchan