



Lawrence Werth

19 October 1956
– 19 August 2014

Memorial Tribute

In August the audiology community was saddened to learn that Lawrence Werth (57), Chairman of PC Werth Ltd, London had passed away after a brave battle with skin cancer. A prolific contributor to this magazine over the years, he is remembered here by friends and colleagues who reflect on his unique personality and his contribution to the hearing care community.

Complex, humorous, good and decent

Lawrence was our dear friend for many years and we enjoyed many happy occasions together. He loved to stay with us in quiet Dorchester and looked forward to my wife Gaynor's home cooking.

He was a complex man – kind and sensitive, with a quirky sense of humour. Lawrence had many hidden talents. He was a lover of classical music, a good pianist, an excellent linguist – speaking fluent French and German. He was also a black run skier, a dynamic speaker and of course an excellent copywriter having contributed many articles for various prestigious publications. A creature of habit, Lawrence enjoyed his St Moritz ski-ing holiday every February without fail (including this year) and loved to spend two weeks at his lovely second home on the South coast every July.

Lawrence was very brave and took his devastating diagnosis with calm acceptance, never giving in to despair. Although he knew he didn't have long, he continued to participate in his company business.

He continued to enjoy life to the full with his remaining strength and on being asked why he didn't go on a luxury world cruise, or buy a Maserati, he replied "Why should I change my life now, when I'm doing the things I like?" We spoke about his situation often and he told us he was accepting and content. He felt he'd enjoyed a privileged life. Of course he wanted to live longer but he never raged at fate.

Lawrence touched the lives of so many people and will long be remembered with genuine affection. A true, good and decent man.

*George Dean,
Former Director, PC Werth Ltd*

A man of integrity

I never actually met Lawrence. In fact I only spoke with Lawrence on no more than six occasions in the 22 years he contributed to ENT & audiology news. Such was the man however, I always felt that I knew him well. When the sad news filtered through the office on August 20th, tears were shed by some of the team and a former employee even phoned in to pay respects.

We all knew how ill Lawrence was, yet he continued to present his reports to the magazine right up to the end, even apologising for being a bit late for the deadline.

Lawrence's company supported us from the launch of our first issue in 1992, as part of PC Werth Ltd's commitment to education. Later this support extended to his supplying comprehensive reports of the EUHA and AAA congresses. These reports were held in high regard by the industry and it was a mark of the high esteem in which Lawrence himself was held that everyone accepted the integrity of his assessment.

We will miss him.

*Justin Chater,
Managing Director & Publisher,
ENT & audiology news*

A wise and witty friend to the Audiology community

I was fortunate to know Lawrence for many years, and to see him from a number of different perspectives. He was a wise and witty friend to the audiology community and when I was Chairman of the British Society of Audiology I came to understand how important he was to the audiology community, and how important that community was to him, almost like

a family. With my involvement with ENT & audiology news I observed how Lawrence was a great friend and supporter to the magazine, and the articles he wrote summarising the Expo's of the American Academy of Audiology (AAA) were essential reading, and did much to promote the AAA in Europe as a 'must-do' meeting. Lastly, Lawrence was unfailingly positive, funny and wise. I shall miss him personally and the audiology community, both in UK and internationally, has lost a wise and faithful friend.

*Dr David Baguley,
Former Chairman of the
British Society of Audiology,
former Audiology Editor,
ENT & audiology news*

We all miss his presence every day

I first met Lawrence eight years ago. He was leaning out of a window at Audiology House, giving me that cheery 'Royal Wave' of his, as I arrived for our first meeting. I remember wondering how old he was – certainly more than thirty, but was he over forty? He certainly couldn't be fifty...

Since then, he certainly aged a little, but always had a youthful outlook – even at the end of his illness. He was frequently surprising: skilful musician? Of course. Nimble dancer? Smoothly done – at the right bash. Accomplished linguist? Natürlich!

So working with Lawrence was an entertaining affair. His towering knowledge of the industry and care for his company mean we all miss his presence every day.

*Tom Parker,
Managing Director, PC Werth Ltd*



Lawrence felt like a brother to us

For as long as anyone in our families can remember, a close friendship and business relationship has existed between us and Lawrence and his late parents Peter and Joan Werth. Our fathers first met in the mid 1950s. When our parents started travelling to Europe in the 1960s, they returned with stories of the Werths and their son Lawrence. I can remember asking them what kind of school he went to, and getting a very complicated answer about how he went to a Public School, which was really a Private School (in America), and that he lived at the school! This was a difficult concept for an American kid to understand, but was nevertheless fascinating to hear!

When we met Lawrence we became close friends at once. Over the years, we shared many wonderful times and occasions together, and it's true to say Lawrence felt like a brother to us.

When Lawrence finished school he did not immediately work in the family hearing aid business, but rather he went to work for Sony where he stayed for several years. When he finally joined PC Werth, he embraced it and never looked back. He had just as much of a feel for the industry as his father Peter. This grew into a passion which became one of the most important things in his life.

Sadly Lawrence visited New York two and half years ago and over dinner, told us of the diagnosis which he had just received. Throughout his fight against his illness, Lawrence was a true inspiration by maintaining a positive outlook. He was as brave as anyone in his fight against such a terrible terminal illness. Everyone in the Meltsner and Spar families will sorely miss Lawrence and never forget our special friend, whom we loved and respected so much.

*Eric Spar & Ron Meltsner,
President and Vice President,
Hal Hen Company*

A sense of loyalty which is rarely found these days

Lawrence was a rare person in so many ways. Around the hearing aid parish pump he stood out as one who never gossiped and who chose to "speak no evil". He was helpful to hundreds of people, who will now miss him sorely, and he exhibited a sense of loyalty which is rarely found these days. His very original sense of humour has lit up many a gloomy meeting room and he always kept his promises. A Rare One indeed.

Lawrence loved the company his parents had created and he loved everyone at Audiology House. He loved the multitude of friends he had in the international hearing aid business and his integrity made sure they loved and respected him in turn. Nat King Cole undoubtedly had Lawrence in mind when he sang his "Unforgettable".

*Søren Hougaard,
Secretary General,
EHIMA European Hearing Instrument
Manufacturers' Association*

We have lost a very warm and cheerful friend



How unfair can things be? A very promising life has ended at its peak. Lawrence Werth was both a very good colleague and a loyal friend. His dedication to, and involvement in the hearing world was outstanding. He kept us all up to date on new developments and changes in the politics around the hard of hearing.

We have all lost an important source of information, but above all, we have lost a very warm and cheerful friend and fellow human being, with whom we have enjoyed many special events and happy hours. We shall all miss Lawrence.

May his spirit and dedication to the hearing field last forever – and keep inspiring us.

*Tom Westermann,
Former Vice President, Sales & Marketing,
Widex*

...we always welcomed him with "Lange Kerls"

The Werth family and the Dreve family share a long friendship. It was right after the Second World War when Peter Werth, Lawrence's father, established



From left, Dr Dreve's mother, Inge, Lawrence and Dr Dreve, celebrating with cake at the UHA exhibition.

his hearing aid shop in the famous Harley Street in London, where he treated many royals, sheikhs and other famous patients. In those days he used the first silicone impression materials mixed by Wolfgang Dreve and so PC Werth Ltd became the first export customer of the Dreve Company. My father and Peter used to call each other practically every morning and they visited each other regularly.

So, it is not surprising that Lawrence and I met in our early years. At every UHA exhibition, (now EUHA), Lawrence was always the first visitor to our booth as a customer and as friend. And we always welcomed him with German sausages called "Lange Kerls", which he loved so much. My mother Inge used to send them to London frequently all those years ago, because he could not get them in England. The EUHA congress often coincided with Lawrence's birthday and we surprised him with a birthday cake on our booth on several occasions.

Lawrence was a very good and close friend, a fine and modest character. He had never spent a lot of money on himself, with maybe one exception. He renovated the "Blue House", his parents' house in Mayfair, extensively and tastefully. He installed a home cinema in the basement where we sometimes watched James Bond movies together following a good meal, a very good glass of wine and enriching conversation.

During his disease I was so deeply impressed by how Lawrence dealt with it. He did not make it a "big thing" and so made it easier for the rest of us. He had to go far too early. Lawrence, you gave me so much to remember. I will miss you!

*Dr Volker Dreve,
Geschäftsführer,
Dreve Otoplastik GmbH*



His work gained recognition as being definitive and authoritative

As Technical Director for PC Werth Ltd, I would accompany Lawrence on his annual pilgrimages to the main European hearing aid audiology congress (EUHA, formerly UHA) and the American Academy of Audiology (AAA) congress to attend their trade exhibitions. These provided the opportunity for Lawrence to acquaint himself with new developments within the industry and, just as importantly, to meet his many friends and colleagues who over the years had grown to know and respect him. Many of these, like Lawrence, were second generation business owners whose parents had been pioneers in what was still a relatively young industry.

During his visits to the exhibitions, Lawrence would spend many hours, often days, diligently progressing from stand to stand and aisle to aisle speaking to manufacturers and suppliers about their products. He would also accumulate copious amounts of literature, which he would study before returning to the exhibition the following day in order to seek any clarification that might have been required.

Upon returning from a congress Lawrence would retreat to his office and emerge some days later with an accurate, concise and totally unbiased review of the exhibition. This would be placed on my desk with the associated literature, often only an hour or two before deadline, to be proof read and

checked for any "technical" inaccuracies prior to submission to ENT & audiology news for publication.

These eagerly awaited reviews, which clearly demonstrated Lawrence's encyclopaedic knowledge of hearing aids and the profession in general, gained recognition by manufacturers, suppliers and audiological professionals as being definitive and authoritative, and were often used by manufacturers to find out what their competitors were up to.

Graham Frost,
Former Technical Director, PC Werth Ltd

What will always stay with me is Lawrence's enthusiasm for the profession and its people

Lawrence's contribution to the hearing healthcare profession was incredibly significant, not only with PC Werth, but also as the Chairman of British Hearing Aid Manufacturers Association (BHAMA).

He was, without question a leading authority figure in the audiology community, although what will always stay with me is Lawrence's enthusiasm for the profession and its people.

Lawrence had a natural, academic instinct with regards to audiology, appreciating and understanding the complexities of manufacture, distribution through to provision and the end user. This ability to appreciate the industry from its many facets gained him respect from all areas and

will ensure his memory and legacy will stay with us.

He was present at so many events and thrived in the company of people happy to debate the latest topics. He greeted innovation with a professional eye but with the look and enthusiasm of a child at Christmas.

Above all else he was a gentleman in the true sense of the word and will be greatly missed.

Duncan Collet-Fenson,
Chair – Association of Independent Hearing Healthcare Practitioners
End of an Era... a bonding influence

It was with great sadness that BSHAA members, my Council colleagues and I received the news about Lawrence's passing. I do not believe it is any exaggeration to say that, for BSHAA, it marked the end of an era. I say this because Lawrence was an abiding connection with the early history of our Society.

Lawrence's father, Peter, was one of the founding members of what was then, 60 years ago, the Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists. Although Lawrence is better known for his roles and activities within BHAMA, like his father, he was a strong supporter of BSHAA with a shared devotion to professionalism in our sector; he was a bonding influence between our profession and our industry. We at BSHAA will certainly miss Lawrence's wise and uniquely insightful contribution to our world.

Barry Downes,
President, British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists (BSHAA)

News of Lawrence's death made headlines internationally...

A dry sense of humour coupled with an amazing breadth of industry knowledge

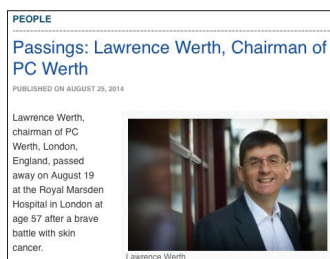
It was always a great treat to bump into Lawrence at conventions. He had such a wonderful dry sense of humour coupled with an amazing breadth of industry knowledge that he never minded sharing. And he was a wonderful writer. I don't hesitate to admit that I always looked forward to reading his conference reports, and thought his articles were simply outstanding.

Karl Strom, Editor, *The Hearing Review*

A calm and friendly man who was so passionate about his work

I was so sad to hear that Lawrence had passed away. He was such a calm and friendly man who was so passionate about his work. I was deeply touched to hear the sad news of his passing. He will be very much missed at the EUHA congress.

Sabine Stübe-Kirchhof, Public relations, *Europäische Union der Hörgeräteakustiker e. V., (EUHA)*



'Die Audiologie war seine Welt' – Audiology was his world



A fitting tribute in the German magazine, *Hörakustik*.

His contribution to hearing care will long be remembered

Lawrence was a man of great warmth, integrity and professionalism and, like his father before him, gave his heart and soul to the Industry.

He had great drive, energy, strength and fortitude as witnessed by his working on, despite his health problems, for which he was much admired.

I had the pleasure and privilege of working with him over many years on the BHAMA Group and I know I voice the views of all his BHAMA colleagues that he will be missed not only by us, but also the wider Industry. His contribution to hearing care will long be remembered.

He was a charming man, a true colleague and friend.

*Tony Grant-Salmon,
The British Hearing Aid Manufacturers'
Association Group (BHAMA)*

I observed his diplomacy during difficult meetings – acting as mediator

On meeting Lawrence for the first time I was taken aback by his affable nature and passion for change in the industry.

As a clinician I was always so impressed by his in-depth knowledge and desire to make a difference. In challenging times, I often observed his diplomacy during the most difficult of meetings, acting as mediator between sectors he used his position to demonstrate common ground between some of the most disparate organisations. Lawrence was a true gentleman and a genuine professional whose passing is a great loss to the community of audiology.

*Will Brassington,
President, British Academy of Audiology*

The last great gentleman of the hearing instrument world

Lawrence was probably the "last great gentleman of the hearing instrument world" as my grandfather, Franjo Steiner, and close friend of Lawrence's father Peter, would have put it were he still with us today. Intelligent, curious, keen to help, always ready to break into a great big smile at a moment's notice, and as funny as, well, an Englishman can be! Lawrence likely took with him, to wherever he is now, more knowledge of hearing and rehabilitation than most of us will ever manage to accumulate. He had the great big shoes of his father Peter to fill, and perhaps unexpectedly – managed to take that quite in his stride. A dear friend, he will be terribly missed.

*Erik A Steiner,
Vice President,
Steiner Hearing Instruments Ltd*



From left: Franjo and Hermina Steiner, Joan and Peter Werth and Dan Steiner who ran the Steiner company from 1982 to 1999.

He was both a gentleman and a gentle man

My friendship with Lawrence began in the early 1980s when we were both training on the HAC course in London to become hearing aid audiologists. As they say, opposites attract; Lawrence was attentive, studious, conscientious, focused and exceptionally bright. He was both a gentleman and a gentle man, but never a pushover (we had many a lively debate about the industry and business); a creature of habit with an appreciation of the good things in life – fine food, fine wine, classical music, theatre-going and a love of films. He delighted in watching the latest Blue Ray Bond films in his home cinema. My family and I have very fond memories of Lawrence busting some great moves on the dance floor at the various company dos over the years. A generous host, he enjoyed welcoming and entertaining me and my wife and our daughters at his wonderful Blue House where the champagne and canapés were always waiting for us before heading out for a night out in the West End.

It was a privilege to have been his friend.
*Roger Brookes,
Hearing Aid Audiologist*

Lawrence was a unique individual with a gentle charm and a genuine interest in people

My favourite memory of Lawrence is of him leaning out of a high window in his beloved Audiology House to wave a cheerful farewell as I drove away. Visiting with Lawrence was always a pleasure, always positive and forward-looking and always informative. He invariably sought opinions on the latest developments and future of the industry he knew and loved. He liked to discuss with enthusiasm new technologies, new products and the market in general. Lawrence was a unique individual with a gentle charm and a genuine interest in the people he met and came to know. These characteristics stayed with him through the changes and challenges he faced in business and in life.

*Bill Cole,
President, AudioScan*

Our Industry has lost a true gentleman

Lawrence and the heritage he took upon himself to honour, was very important to the young Interacoustics and the people there. We are most grateful to have enjoyed this classic relationship based on common needs, help, fairness and the personal integrity we met. And through the years Lawrence never changed his honesty and interest in us.

Meeting him at EUHA after his grim fortune had struck, did not change anything, "Yes, I have got skin cancer – it's right here," pointing to the dark source. "Unfortunately it is not very promising. Have Rie and the others arrived yet?" His quick attention always looking outwards, never complaining.

May we not forget Lawrence and what he chose to represent.

*Bue Kristensen,
Director of External Affairs,
Interacoustics*

When compiling this tribute to Lawrence, I noticed that the same adjectives cropped up again and again – "affable", "loyal", "decent", "charming", "diplomatic", "intelligent", "talented", "enthusiastic" and "surprising." Having known Lawrence for almost twenty years – these were the character traits which I too admired in him and was familiar with. However, in the past two years I came to know a new side to Lawrence. He displayed a bravery, dignity, courage and nobility that stunned many. To quote his old friend Volker Dreve, "He did not make his illness a 'big thing' and so made it easier for the rest of us."

The recurring phrase of all these tributes – Lawrence was a gentleman and it was an honour to have known him.

*Rosaleen Shine,
ENT & audiology news*

Memorial Service

A Memorial Service took place at St George's Church, Hanover Square on Tuesday 4 November 2014.