Obituaries

Dr Sonia Russell
1945–2002

Sonia Russell was born in Leicester, England in 1945. She moved to Australia at the age of 3, where she lived until the family returned to England when she was 11. Sonia trained in ballet and at 17 joined the Arts Theatre in Rouen, touring France and Italy. Subsequently, she became involved in the travel and tourism industry, running language courses and spending periods as a member of cabin crew both at sea and in the air.

After training as a French interpreter, specialising in the law, Sonia spent the remainder of her career involved in translating and interpreting into and out of French. Based in Dover, a major entry port on the south-east coast, her extensive experience in the legal domain included work with solicitors, the Immigration Service, the Facilitation Support Unit, HM Customs and Excise, the Kent Police force and local prisons, as well as the local and regional Court Service.

In addition to her years of professional experience, Sonia was a highly qualified legal interpreter and translator; as a Member of the Institute of Linguists, she was a certified practitioner. In 1998, she graduated from Aston University, Birmingham, UK, with a MSc in Teaching English for Specific Purposes. Despite suffering several periods of prolonged and life-threatening illness, Sonia went on to study for a PhD in Applied Linguistics, and completed her degree in 2001. Her thesis, entitled ‘The effect of interpreting on interviews with suspects’, was examined by Professor Malcolm Coulthard and Sonia was awarded her PhD. Her amazing resilience, good humour and determination in successfully completing the degree despite such difficult circumstances will remain an inspiration to her family, friends and colleagues.

After completing her doctorate, Sonia continued to work full-time as a legal interpreter and translator, but also became more actively involved in the academic world. She gave a guest lecture to postgraduates at the University of Birmingham, and presented papers based on her thesis at the 2000 British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL) conference in Cambridge, UK and at IAFL 5 in Malta in 2001. Sonia also published a number of articles and a book review in the period following her graduation. Even during what proved to be Sonia’s final months, she was still planning her next project, a book to be co-authored with Janet Cotterill on the impact of interpreting on the police interview process.
Sonia died peacefully on Remembrance Day 2002, and is survived by her husband, Howard and two daughters, Tania and Delia. Her funeral was attended by hundreds of people, including representatives from Aston University and the IAFL, as well as police, immigration and customs officers from all over the south-east of England.

She will be greatly missed by all who knew her and her passing is a sad loss to the forensic linguistics community.

Conference Papers

2000 “The questions will be put to you in English…”: the interpreter as forensic linguist in Police interviews with foreign suspects’, paper presented at BAAL 2000, Cambridge, UK.


Publications


Janet Cotterill
Obituaries

Dr James Kent Farmer Anthony, C.Eng., M.I.E.E.
1921–2003

Jim ‘Tony’ Anthony, who died on January 28, 2003 at the age of 81, was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. He began his career with the Post Office working as a telephone engineer after serving with the Royal Signals from 1939–1946. In 1948 he was appointed by David Abercrombie as Technician in the newly established Department of Phonetics, Edinburgh University. He was one of very few people to make the transition from technician to academic. He was promoted to Senior Technician in 1951, became a Research Fellow in the early sixties, Lecturer in 1971 and Senior Lecturer in 1974 until his retirement in 1984; a remarkable achievement for one who left school at the age of 14. He worked in many different fields. In the early days he was chiefly concerned with the setting up of the Phonetics Laboratory. This involved not only finding the right sort of equipment to buy but also inventing and making mechanical and electronic apparatus for speech research. Over the following years experimental phonetics at the University of Edinburgh was to become renowned and this was thanks to Tony’s work. Later, under the auspices of the British Council, he advised universities in India and Pakistan, Holland, Poland and Sweden on the establishing of their own phonetics laboratories. In the Sixties, as Research Fellow, Tony was heavily involved in the technical development of PAT (Parametric Artificial Talking device), one of the first speech synthesizers. An interest in the structure and functions of the larynx came next. He continued this work as Visiting Professor at the University of California at Los Angeles during the 1963/4 session. His PhD thesis, *Breathing and Speaking*, published in 1982 was the exposition of all he had discovered about the larynx and speech aerodynamics in general, an area which had not been widely studied before. He went on to extend his interest to the medical applications of phonetics laboratory work.

Tony was no less active in retirement. He became interested in the forensic applications of phonetics and was the first secretary of the International Association for Forensic Phonetics. He continued to invent, design and make all manner of gadgets. He read widely, particularly military and local history. For 30 years he was an active member of the Scottish National Party and enjoyed a good political argument. He continued his life-long hobby of sailing and latterly took up curling.

The many visitors to the house in Dysart, Fife, which he shared with his wife, Nan, were assured of a hearty welcome, lively conversation, good food and, of course, a nightcap of Scotch malt whisky.

Friends and colleagues all over the world will remember him with admiration and affection.

Marion Shirt