

Breaking News

## **Prof Peter W. G. Morris Leaves Lasting Legacy**

### **Emeritus Professor at UCL and former APM Chair passes away in UK**

7 September 2021 – London, UK – It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Peter Morris, one of the great scholars of Project Management. Known throughout the academic and practitioner worlds for his insights into the reality of projects, he sought to bridge what was sometimes seen as a gulf between these two co-existing spheres through a thorough understanding of project success and the factors that contribute to it.

Peter held a variety of institutional positions, including Chairman of APM, the *Association of Project Managers* (as it then was). Perhaps his greatest achievement was the broadening of the concept on project management from a simply technician and limited occupation to one that should properly be termed the management of projects. He did this by changing the name of the APM to the *Association for Project Management*, thus recognising that many more functions were included in the occupation than simply those performed by the Project Manager. This built on his research that showed the importance of managing the project over its entire life cycle, thus including strategic fit and broad business issues which had the effect of moving the occupation from a technician niche to one of broader importance.

Originally a civil engineer, Peter was motivated by a desire to understand why some projects succeeded while others failed, despite seemingly similar approaches to planning and execution. This desire led to his PhD, one of the first to take project management as a field of academic study, drawing upon established theory and thus laying the theoretical foundations for project management to be researched. Later, he returned to the world of practice as a main Board director at Bovis (now part of Lend Lease) where he worked on major projects in the Middle East, Latin America, Russia, the UK and the US as a project management consultant.



He returned to Manchester to develop a strong project management department at the University of Management Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST). There, he established a world class doctoral programme, before moving to University College London (UCL) where he established the Bartlett School of Construction and Project Management.

Part of the important bridge Peter built between practice and academia was developed through his work at Templeton College, Oxford during his time as Director of the Major Projects Association.

In addition to his academic work, Peter found time to support professional bodies. He was a long-standing member of the Institute of Civil engineers and held a variety of institutional appointments including Deputy Chairman of the International Project Management Association (IPMA) and Vice President of APM (2006 – 2020).

As an academic, he published more than 120 refereed papers and wrote or edited half a dozen books. Peter's contribution to project management research was marked by the award of PMI's Research Achievement Award (2000) and IPMA's Research Award (2009). His many contributions, both academic and practice-based, to APM were recognised through his receiving its highest honour – the Sir Monty Finniston Award.

Peter's intellect was coupled with a style that was engaging and willing to encourage others and Peter will long be remembered as a rare combination of practitioner and academic; he has been an immensely important commentator on and contributor to the field and discipline of project management.

*Editor's note: This tribute was prepared by PMWJ global advisor Miles Shepherd, for whom Peter was a mentor, close personal friend and professional colleague for many years. Peter also served as an Honorary Global Advisor for the PMWJ (see more of his background [here](#)). He was truly one of the world's great researchers and leading authorities on program and project management; he will be very sorely missed by many around the PM world.*

*This notice will be updated when funeral arrangements and where donations in lieu of flowers may be sent are known.*