

A dignified campaigner



I had the privilege to meet and know Nancy Tait as a strong determined campaigner for those with asbestos diseases. She raised awareness of the dangers of asbestos at a time when few others were doing so.

I knew Nancy for the last 10 years of her life. She had even in her later years a strong focus and analytical mind. She died last month at the age of 89.

She ran SPAID, (Society for the Prevention of Asbestosis and Industrial Diseases) later OEDA (Occupational and Environmental Diseases Association) until last year.

Nancy was fiercely independent and ran the organisation almost single-handedly. She spoke to those with asbestos diseases including mesothelioma and to many of their families. Having lost her husband to mesothelioma, she was in the best position to advise and assist. The number of clients whose claims I have handled who spoke to Nancy who have told me that Nancy gave them strength and support are innumerable.

Only 2 years ago, Nancy came to Manchester to address a conference on asbestos which my firm had organised. Asbestos lung cancer is an under diagnosed condition and the aim of the conference was to raise awareness. Nancy spoke at length advising the audience of solicitors, medical and other health professionals what needed to be done and what we should be doing, in the nicest possible way, of course. She was really rather sweet but you knew what she was driving at.

At her funeral in March, in her son's address, he admitted that Nancy did not enjoy public speaking, there was no hint that that was the case when she addressed the audience.

Nancy had a profound sense of justice and an unflinching determination to ensure justice was done.

The campaign for improving working conditions for those who worked with asbestos both in the UK and abroad will probably never end but Nancy Tait MBE, honorary doctor of Southampton University and a Member of the Institute of Safety & Health made a formidable contribution.

Her son John said she was not a campaigner in any other area of her life and it couldn't stop me thinking of this quotation,

Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them.

I suspect that Nancy confounded Shakespeare and was in fact all three.

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Notes

[John Pickering and Partners LLP](#)- Specialist [mesothelioma compensation](#) solicitors

We are a specialist personal injury law firm. We have been handling claims for industrial disease for over 30 years. Most of our work involves acting for asbestos disease victims. We only act for the sufferers of asbestos diseases and never act for the organisations that caused the asbestos exposure or their insurers. We have an ethical approach and pledge to donate 10% of our net profits every year to good causes that help asbestos sufferers. [Click here](#) to find out about our donations to good causes. We have also been involved in most of the landmark judgments that shape this area of law. Find out more [about us](#) or find out about [our reported cases](#). We are on the panels of several asbestos support groups and are ranked highly by legal guides. [Click here](#) to find out more about what others have said about us.

[John Pickering and Partners LLP](#) is a niche legal practice that has represented Claimants in the leading asbestos "test cases" in the last ten years. The firm represented Sylvia Barker in *Barker v Corus (UK) Plc*, a case that highlighted the legal tactics of employers and insurers trying to cut back their compensation liabilities to mesothelioma sufferers, and which prompted the amendment of the Compensation Act 2006 to ensure full compensation for mesothelioma claims. The firm represented two of the three Claimants in the *Fairchild appeal*, in which the insurance industry tried unsuccessfully to block compensation altogether for mesothelioma sufferers unable to identify which of two or more sources of asbestos exposure had caused their illness.

The firm represented Alice Jefferson, a mesothelioma sufferer, whose illness and compensation claim against Cape Asbestos were featured in the important documentary "*Alice: A Fight For Life*." Shown by Yorkshire Television in July 1982, the programme was an important catalyst for legal change and public awareness

of the plight of mesothelioma and other asbestos disease sufferers and a prompt for important legal reform.

Mesothelioma is a type of cancer that affects the lining of certain bodily organs. It most commonly affects the lining of the lungs (the pleura) but it can affect other areas including organs in the abdominal cavity (the peritoneum).

According to the [British Lung Foundation](#), more than 2,000 people are diagnosed with mesothelioma every year in the UK and there is one mesothelioma death every five hours. The number of deaths from mesothelioma increased from 153 in 1968 to 1,969 in 2004 and is expected to peak at 2,450 between 2011 and 2015.

The [British Lung Foundation](#), supported by John Pickering and Partners LLP, launched the first Action Mesothelioma Day on 27th February 2006, to raise awareness about mesothelioma, to improve the treatment and care of mesothelioma patients, and to lobby for better funding for research into mesothelioma and for the protection and education of people working with asbestos.

If you need advice about an asbestos related illness, [contact us](#) now for information about making a claim for compensation.