

## Students and staff pay fond tribute to Ken Todd

By James Merill

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Students and staff have described the James College Provost Ken Todd as a “legend” and a “unique character” in the run-up to his retirement this September.

Todd, a respected lecturer and popular College figure, is leaving York after 15 years in the Electronics Department, 14 of which he has also served as James Provost.

Todd’s departure has sparked a number of warm comments from students and staff.

Alexandra Clark, James JCRC Chair, said, “Ken has been an absolute asset to James. Over the years, his contribution has been invaluable. We are all going to miss him, although I’m sure his retirement and relocation will come as an equally heavy blow to the Derry and the Charles.”

Tony Ward, the Deputy Head of Electronics, praised Todd’s “devoted services” and “unique character” and said, “His style of mixing the serious message with his now-famous jokes was well received by students he taught. True testament to this was his farewell lecture, which was given to a packed house. His teaching reviews have been consistently excellent, and to staff and students alike, Ken is a legend in his own lifetime.”

Todd arrived at York in January 1992 from Liverpool, where he had been a teacher at the Polytechnic College.

Despite originally working in industry, Todd has always had an academic background, gaining a BSc in Mathematics from London, an MSc from St Andrews and an MA in Systems Engineering from York’s rival Lancaster University.

Nonetheless, Todd describes his entry into academic as a “tangled tale”. His last job in industry was for an American electronics company where, as Managing Director, he disagreed with his superior about “pretty much everything”. Todd said, “Unsurprisingly, I got fired; it didn’t come as a shock”.

After a brief period teaching at a local college where he learnt to teach IT and Business Studies often by reading up on the subject the night before, Todd came to York in January 1992 as a Lecturer in Technology and Management.

“I came into this life because I wanted to teach,” Todd said. “I haven’t done much research, to be honest; I’ve devoted most of time to teaching and administration”.

Of his role as James College Provost, which he has held since 1993, Todd said, “I thoroughly enjoyed being Provost. It is extremely rewarding to be able to help build a community and help so many students cope with their problems.”

He added, “It has been great fun to work here. The department has been fantastic; it’s a tremendous crowd of people. If you ask me what I’ll miss most, though, I’d say I will miss the students most. I’ve enjoyed being Provost and I’ve enjoyed the teaching.” Todd added that, “The students have always been good fun and a pleasure to know.”

Sam Morris, a first-year electronics students taught by Todd, gave him glowing praise, saying, “There are

dull lecturers and funny ones, but what sets Ken apart from all the others in my mind is that no matter how boring the subject could be, he could always be guaranteed to make it bring a smile to your face.”

Michael Hailes, another first-year electronics student, said of Todd, “He is just a complete legend – easily the most entertaining lecturer in electronics. His teaching style of mixing rather tricky maths with his hilarious stories is brilliant.”



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