

THE PRESS

OAPs' champion Don Parlabeau has died aged 73

9:57am Wednesday 30th December 2009

By Nicola Fifield



Don Parlabeau highlighting heating issues for elderly people in 2008

A FORMER rail engineer who dedicated his retirement to championing the rights of York's pensioners has lost his battle with cancer.

Tributes have been made to Don Parlabeau, who was chairman of York Older People's Assembly for six years before stepping down from the role earlier this year.

The 73-year-old, who had one son, Christopher, with his late wife, Margaret, grew up in London, but moved to Hornsea with his family at the age of 14.

He left school at 15, worked for a grocer for a couple of years, then joined the Army as a driver for three years before coming to York to work at a grocer's in Spurriergate.

Mr Parlabeau, who represented the [Holgate](#) ward from 1984 to 1988 as a Labour councillor, went on to work at Rowntree's before eventually joining the railways, working in signalling and telecommunications.

He rose up the ranks, taking early retirement in 1997 from his position as fault control engineer with [Jarvis](#).

It was then Mr Parlabeau began his charity work, starting with the charity Older Citizens Advocacy York (OCA Y).

In this role he did everything from accompanying older people to hospital appointments to sitting in with them in meetings with their solicitor to discuss neighbour disputes.

He also became involved with the York Older Person's Forum, which is now known as York Older People's Assembly.

As chair of the assembly, he represented York at a regional and national level and worked tirelessly to make sure the views of older people were understood by the decision-makers.

Linda Tester, manager of OCA Y, said: "He was a man who was committed to fighting for justice for everyone, but for older people in particular.

"He was also a kind and generous man, very friendly and I loved him to bits."

Bob Towner, vice chair of York Older People's Assembly, said Mr Parlabeau would be "sorely missed".

In his little spare time, Mr Parlabeau, who had two granddaughters, Hannah and Larissa, made model boats in a wooden shed at the bottom of his garden.

His funeral will take place at York Crematorium on January 7 at 10am.