

Putter a "great champion" of the industry - Gary Leih

Former Ogilvy UK chairman and long-time friend Gary Leih paid an emotional tribute to the late Robyn Putter, calling him a "great champion" of the industry and showering him with praise for his "sterling contribution" to the industry's transformation.



The late Robyn Putter.

"It is with great sadness that I learned that he passed away," he told Bizcommunity.com in a telephonic conversation from Cape Town. "We have worked together for about 30 years and I have to say that he did a fantastic job in taking the advertising industry to a level nobody has ever done."

Putter (59), former Ogilvy SA CEO and Ogilvy Worldwide chairman, died of cancer on Monday.

Leih, who returned from London about four months ago, said Putter had an incredible touch of creativity and praised him for building about 25 Ogilvy agencies throughout the rest of Africa.

"I have been seeing him once or twice per week since I came back from Britain and I must tell you he fought all the way and he stayed incredibly positive until the end," Leih said. "It was amazing how he built the company to an extent of becoming one of the biggest advertising firms in the world. It is sad that he is now gone."

"Set the highest standards"

Mike Abel, another Ogilvy veteran and now chief executive partner of recently launched M&C Saatchi Abel, described to Bizcommunity how Putter "was not an easy man; those that set the highest standards never are. Robyn wholeheartedly believed in David Ogilvy's notion of 'Divine Discontent'. As such, he was seldom satisfied. That was tough on those around him. The bad ideas were killed, the good ones punished into shiny greatness.

"Nobody ever doubted however that Robyn cared deeply," continued Abel. " About his family. About his people. And about

his country. He was a philosopher, a profound thinker. He had a 'love in ze heart and a clown in ze head'. He will leave a great hole but not as great as some may think because a good part of his genius, humanity and merry lunacy is now carried by the thousands of people he taught, touched and inspired. Whole cultures have been formed in his way.

"Robyn was South Africa's greatest advertising talent. We were privileged to have travelled some of the road with him. God bless you. Hamba kahle."

Bizcommunity.com extends its condolences to the Putter family, friends and colleagues.

Updated Wednesday, 3 March 2010, at 1.03pm. Additional reporting by Simone Puterman.

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