

Moving force in world of finance

William John Murchie Ewing, MBE

Chartered accountant

Born: September 17, 1921; Adelaide

Died: October 26, 2006; Adelaide

BILL Ewing was one of South Australia's leading insolvency practitioners. A highly respected chartered accountant, he was a partner in Touche Ross & Co, and the firm's national insolvency director.

The passion he felt for his profession extended to the array of business, charitable, social and sporting groups to which he committed himself wholeheartedly. His services to the community were recognised in 1983 when he was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE).

The first years of Bill's life were spent in Sydney where his father was secretary to the general manager of the Adelaide Steamship Company. After the family's return to Adelaide, Bill's secondary education was at Pulteney Grammar School and St Peter's College. At both schools, he formed friendships and associations that lasted throughout his life. He was secretary of the St Peter's Old Collegians' Association during the 1950s and was a member of the school's council of governors for 12 years.

In 1938, he gained a clerical position at the Savings Bank of South Australia, where he worked until he joined the RAAF in 1940.

A posting to Ceylon and Singapore with 205 Squadron followed training as an air observer in 1941. Bill then spent three years as navigator on Beaufort bombers, posted with RAAF No 100 Squadron to Milne Bay in



Papua (1942-43) and with No 8 Squadron (1944-45) in New Guinea. He attained the rank of flight lieutenant. Following the war, he worked as a bank clerk and studied at night at the School of Mines and then at the University of Adelaide where, in 1951, he was awarded the Joseph Fisher Medal for Commerce. Bill began his career as a public accountant in 1953, working as a sole practitioner and from 1957 in partnership with R.D. Evans. He was appointed as an official liquidator by the SA Supreme Court in 1963.

In 1967, he joined Thomas Sara Macklin & Co as a partner, having had to return to study

and examinations in order to become a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants. By the time of the firm's merger and rebirth as Touche Ross & Co in 1974, he was concentrating exclusively on insolvency. He was a state councillor of the Australian Society of Accountants for 12 years and state president (1975-76). He was also a national and a state chairman of the society's public accountants group.

He was chairman of the state committee of the Insolvency Practitioners Association of Australia and later national vice-president. In 1990, he was made the association's first life member. The Australian Institute of Credit Management and the Australian Bank Officials' Association also awarded him life membership. Bill's retirement from Touche Ross at the end of 1986 was far from the end of his career.

Among the longer-lasting of his appointments, he was a director of SAGRIC International and chairman of Gillingham Printers. He was a member of the Legacy Club for nearly 40 years. He was founding chairman and a president of the Public Schools' Club. He played cricket for the Payneham Cricket Club and then for St Peter's Collegians' Cricket Club until he was in his late 50s. He was a president of the Adelaide Turf Cricket Association.

He delighted in wit, words, and lively debate. A warm and generous host, he loved the companionship of family and friends. He was deeply proud of his Scottish heritage.

He is survived by his wife, Peg, whom he married in 1943, daughter Deirdre and granddaughter Cathy.