

John Rivett-Carnac (Armstrong 1954 – 1958) passed away on Sunday 14 June of this year. He had been suffering from cancer for a number of years, and his bravery and patience in fighting the disease was an inspiration to all who knew and loved him.

His final moments were spent at home with his family, and he is remembered with deep love and gratitude by his wife Candy, his sons Hamilton (Tony) and Stephen Wende, Michael Arthur (Marc) and Candace.

After he left College he attended Wits University where he studied mechanical engineering. He then worked for East Rand Engineering as an apprentice. The next 18 months were spent at Metropolitan Vickers in Manchester completing his training. From there he took time to work and travel in America. It was in Buffalo New York where he met Candy and her two sons from a previous marriage (Tony and Stephen). He married Candy in Buffalo and brought his new family to South Africa in 1966.

Marc and Candace joined the family in 1967 and 1969. John was a true pioneer of what is today known as a 'modern family'. We all grew up together as one united and very happy family.

His legacy of love was the earliest lesson he taught his children and was something that he passed on to everyone he came in contact with.

After returning to South Africa, John joined his father at Duncan Andrew Engineers in Alberton. He eventually became MD. The company closed in 1986 and in 1988 he was instrumental in starting Duncanmec. He negotiated the Spitzer dry bulk tanker license for Duncanmec and it remains today a leader in the dry bulk tanker market in SA. Unique road transport vehicles were also manufactured and they remain the benchmark in quality in the industry today.

One story among so many stands as a metaphor for the way he lived his life and managed his business. A few years back there was a strike in the engineering industry and many of his management colleagues refused to negotiate with the strikers. John, already in his early 70s, walked out of the factory gates and approached the lines of strikers who were now becoming aggressive. The crowds on the picket lines could hardly believe their eyes as this elderly man approached them. One of the leaders of the strike walked out to meet him and the two of them conferred for some time. Tempers were calmed and the strike remained peaceful. As John shook hands with the union leaders, one of them remarked: 'You are the kind of manager we want to deal with.'

John will always be remembered for his compassion and decency and courage. We will miss him always, but his well-lived and loved life will continue to resonate through our own.