

IMLI MOURNS THE DEATH OF MR. WILLIAM O'NEIL, IMO SECRETARY-GENERAL EMERITUS AND CHAIRMAN EMERITUS OF THE IMLI GOVERNING BOARD

The IMO International Maritime Law Institute wishes to express its heartfelt condolences to the family of Mr. William O'Neil, IMO Secretary-General Emeritus, for their sad loss. Mr. O'Neil, a colossus in the maritime world, died yesterday, 29 October, at the age of 93 years.



Mr. William O'Neil (Deceased, Secretary-General, Emeritus, IMO), Professor Attard (Director, IMLI) and Faculty with the IMLI Graduating Class of 1998-1999

Mr. O'Neil served for fourteen years as Secretary-General of the IMO, having been elected for his first term in 1990. He was re-elected for a second and third term beginning in 1994 and 1998, respectively. Mr. O'Neil also served for a further two-year term from 2002 to 2004. He remained a constant part of the IMO family even after the end of his tenure, actively participating in many IMO events and continuing to work tirelessly for the maritime community.

His relationship with the Organization had commenced way back in 1972 when he represented Canada, his homeland, at the IMO Council. During this period, Mr. O'Neil became Chairman of the IMO Council in 1980 and was re-elected four times in this position.

After assuming the post of Secretary-General, Mr. O'Neil became Chairman of the IMLI Governing Board in 1991.

He graduated in civil engineering from the University of Toronto in his native Canada in 1949 and served in various positions with the Federal Department of Transport. He was Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard from 1975 to 1980 and then became President and Chief Executive Officer of the St. Lawrence Authority, a position he held until joining the IMO.



Flags at IMLI flown at half-mast to mark the death of Mr. William O'Neil

Mr. O'Neil was a member of the Association of Professional Engineers of Ontario and of the American Society of Civil Engineers. He was Doctor of Laws (Honoris Causa), University of Malta, Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa), Nottingham Trent University, Doctor of Laws (Honoris Causa), Memorial University of Newfoundland and Doctor of Laws (Honoris Causa), Korea Maritime University. In 1992 he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. In 1994 he was elected Member of the Royal Academy of Engineering and Fellow of the Institute of Logistics and Transport (formerly the Chartered Institute of Transport), the United

Kingdom. He was awarded The Admirals' Medal, Canada. In 1995 he was awarded the NUMAST Award (National Union of Marine Aviation and Shipping Transport Officers), the United Kingdom; the SEATRADE Personality of the Year Award; the Professional Engineers Ontario Gols Medal and was made Commandeur, Ordre National des Cèdres, Lebanon and Member of the Order of Canada. In 1996, he was made a member of the Engineering Alumni Hall of Distinction at the University of Toronto and in 1997, he was awarded the Silver Bell Award of the Seamen's Church Institute, New York. In 1998, he was awarded the CMA Commodore Award (Connecticut Maritime Association), the United States, the Orden "Vasco Nuñez de Balboa" en el Grado de Gran Cruz, Panama and the "Dioscuri" Prize, Lega Navale Italiana, Agrigento, Italy.



Professor David Attard, conferring the Award for Meritorious Contribution towards the Progressive Development and Codification of International Maritime Law on Mr. William O'Neil at the 2004 IMLI Graduation Ceremony

In 1999, he was awarded the Vice Admiral "Jerry" Land Medal of the Society of Naval Architects and Marine engineers, the United States and in 2000 the Halert C. Shephard Award, the United States. In 2001, he was awarded the Medal for Distinguished Services to the Directorate General for Maritime Affairs, Colombia and in 2002 the CITIS (Communication & IT in Shipping) Lifetime Achievement Award, the United Kingdom, the Golden Jubilee Medal, Canada and the "15 November 1817 Medal, Uruguay. In the same year, he was made a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights (Honoris Causa), the United Kingdom. In 2003, he was awarded the Order of Merit of the Merchant Marine, Venezuela.

Upon hearing of his passing, Mr. Kitack Lim Secretary-General, had this to say:

“Mr. O’Neil was a truly great Secretary-General whose actions and initiatives had a great and lasting impact on the work of the Organization. I personally, always valued his guidance and advice, as many of you valued his friendship and leadership.”

Professor Attard expressed his sadness as he recalled that it was Secretary-General O’Neil who appointed him as Director and oversaw the growth of IMLI into a centre of excellence.

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