Christopher (‘Chris’) Jensen-Butler was Professor of Economics at the University of St Andrews during a period of remarkable expansion and development over the period 1995-2006. He was Head, School of Economics (and then Head of the enlarged School of Economics & Finance), University of St. Andrews from 1996 until his untimely death in 2006. During his time in the School, he was an active member of the Centre for Research into Industry, Enterprise, Finance and the Firm (CRIEFF). He arrived first in St Andrews, to take up the Chair of Urban and Regional Planning (1995-96), but rapidly found that Economics & Finance was a more congenial home for his particular mix of intellectual interests.

Chris was born Christopher Butler in Derby, UK, 5 June 1945, of an Irish family that had settled in Liverpool. He was resident in Denmark from 1969 to 1995, in the course of which he took the surname Jensen-Butler, after his first marriage. He was greatly influenced by Danish social constructions, including the design of their university education system. This was evident in his open, consultative mode of management, during his decade of Headship at St Andrews. His quarter century in Denmark also explains his love of sailing, a pursuit not entirely neglected when he moved to Scotland, but one that was certainly central to his leisure time in Denmark, often spent sailing his own ship on the Baltic.

Chris was educated at Bemrose School, Derby (a grammar school from 1930-1975). This notable school has the motto Non Nobis Sed Aliis (Not for us but for others), and this motto itself epitomizes Chris’s period of leadership in St Andrews. After leaving school, he went on to read geography at Durham University (then, as now, a top rated university for geography), where he was a member of University College. He continued his studies in Durham after graduating BA, and went on to obtain a PhD in Social Sciences, specializing in geography and planning. His doctoral work laid the foundation for a long and fruitful research career. Throughout his life, he retained a close interest in his alma mater.

Starting with an Assistant Professorship in 1969 at the University of Aarhus, he held various positions in Denmark over the period 1969-1995. The nature of these posts indicates the diversity of Chris’s interests and skills: Associate Professor in the Department of Geography, University of Aarhus (1972-87); Associate Professor in the Department of Mathematics (Mathematics and Planning Division), University of Aarhus (1987-91) and Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Aarhus (1991-95). His intellectual gifts were wide ranging, and he was as happy debating mathematical niceties (including the sense or otherwise of our university marking systems!) as political issues of the day, or reflective philosophical matters. He spoke several European languages fluently, including, naturally, Danish, but also French, Spanish and Portuguese.

Chris was a visiting professor in the Department of Geography, University of Copenhagen and a visiting professor at the University of Lisbon. He used these visiting connections effectively to keep his research active, in the face of the heavy burden of administration he bore as Head of Economics & Finance. He undertook consultancy work on many projects, including work for the European Commission and national and local government agencies, as well as for private companies, working in the planning and economic development fields.

His research interests were in urban and regional economics, with special interests in local and regional economic development, transport, telematics and the environment. He published in a wide range of journals, including Regional Studies, Urban Studies, Environment & Planning A, Papers of Regional Science, European Urban and Regional Studies and The International Journal of Urban and Regional Research. His (edited) books included Modelling the Economy and the Environment (Springer Verlag, Berlin), and European Cities in Competition (Avebury, UK), and he was the author of Telematics and Urban Development, published by DGXIII, European Commission.

During his period of Headship at St Andrews (1996-2006), he oversaw a large increase in the scale of the School, and was a facilitator of many innovations in its organization and operations, including the creation of a new School of Economics & Finance, and the introduction of a very open system of governance within the School, notably in its relations with students, who were drawn into involvement, in a very positive way, with numerous pedagogic developments. He had a knack of getting consensual agreement for all his many initiatives, and was an ever present figure in the beautiful setting of Castlecliff (where Economics & Finance is located), overlooking the West Sands of St Andrews: surely one of the most beautiful university School locations in the world.

Chris enjoyed hill-walking, and found Scotland an ideal location for this outdoor pursuit. Another interest, this one indoors, was classical music. His memorable Christmas quizzes reflected his familiarity with a range of the very best in classical music. Finally, he was a lover of good food and wine, and a most congenial host. He would agree that a lot of the best deals are done over dinner. Sadly, his illness was diagnosed late, and he had worked at full stretch until shortly before his death. He faced his final days with great courage, and maintained a certain plucky sense of humour, in floating ideas for his funeral arrangements. Chris died on the 17th May 2006 at the memorial Hospital, St Andrews. His funeral was at Kirkaldy crematorium, on the 3rd June 2007.
A memorial plaque to Chris was unveiled by his widow Carme Vila, in the Spanish Garden, within the grounds of the School of Economics & Finance, on the 2nd May 2007, an occasion which was attended by many of his friends and colleagues. Professor John Beath, a previous Head of Economics, gave the memorial address, and led all present in celebrating Chris’s life over a glass (or two) of Cava.

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