

The legacy of Professor Mike Wright (1952-2019) continues to grow with the forthcoming special issues in [the Journal of British Management](#) and [the Journal of World Business](#) dedicated to him. The former is devoted to the topic of entrepreneurial finance, and the latter to the field of state capitalism, which shows the versatility of Mike's interests.

To pay tribute to Professor Mike Wright, Dr Anna Grosman, a co-editor of the JWB special issue in Mike's memory, interviewed Maryse Wright, his wife, to get a deeper understanding of Mike's inner personality which we all cherished so much.

From very early in his academic career, Mike was already writing, while he was lecturing but without a PhD. He was so productive that all the articles went towards the PhD from Nottingham University. They often joked with Maryse that Mike looked for excuses to escape family chores: when in 1986 his son Julien was born, Mike started the Centre for Management Buyout Research. And in 1989 when his daughter was born, he became a full Professor – another trick to get away from the childcare, they often laughed.

A quote from the preface of "Management buy-outs" by Mike Wright and John Coyne (1985) neatly summarizes Mike's inner struggles between research and family commitments: "Finally, a note of sincere thanks to those who have suffered most during the gathering of research material, and the preparation of this typescript – John's wife, Julie, and daughter Emily, and Mike's wife, Maryse. They have suffered the absence and the irritation, and have done the chores the authors were not available to do. New research will have to be found if the authors are to continue to avoid doing the garden, washing the car, and painting the house!"

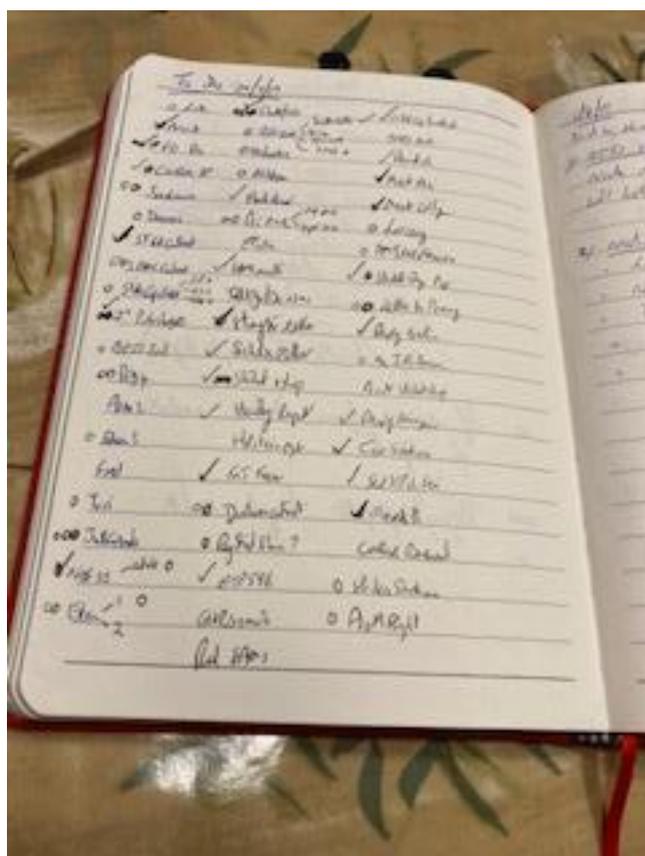
Mike was working very hard, but he was very supportive of Maryse when in 1988-1990 she was working part-time and also studying towards an MA. Mike would take the children regularly to his parents on Sunday afternoons so that Maryse could study. Mike would never switch off work but established a strong tradition of taking the family away for a weekend in June, for example to the Farne Islands or Robin Hood's Bay. Mike was always on the go and Maryse remembers him having to join the family late for a holiday in Crete in 2002 because he had been attending a conference in the US.

Mike was a very quick reader. Amongst his all favourites were "Catch-22" by Joseph Heller and "The Glass Bead Game" by Hermann Hesse. He had read many books by Bill Bryson, he also had read lots of books by Nick Hornby and biographies of Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Alex Ferguson (he was passionate both about Bob Dylan and football), books about current affairs, for example, John Simpson: "A mad world, my masters", Jeremy Paxman, Andrew Marr, many books about Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, cycling. He liked French literature and read both in English and French the classics such as Emile Zola, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre. He knew everything

about current affairs, subscribing to The Observer, The Guardian, and The Sunday Times. He liked humour and parody. He also loved the Monty Python movies.

Mike found it very easy to relate to people, especially around work. He could talk about work issues and wider interests but paradoxically, did not like 'chit chat' in purely social informal gatherings. Mike was an excellent listener – at the same time listening to people and concentrating on something else. For example, Mike could read and have music playing and could do several things at the same time.

Mike loved writing his articles. He was very focused, he always had a to-do list (articles to write, etc.)



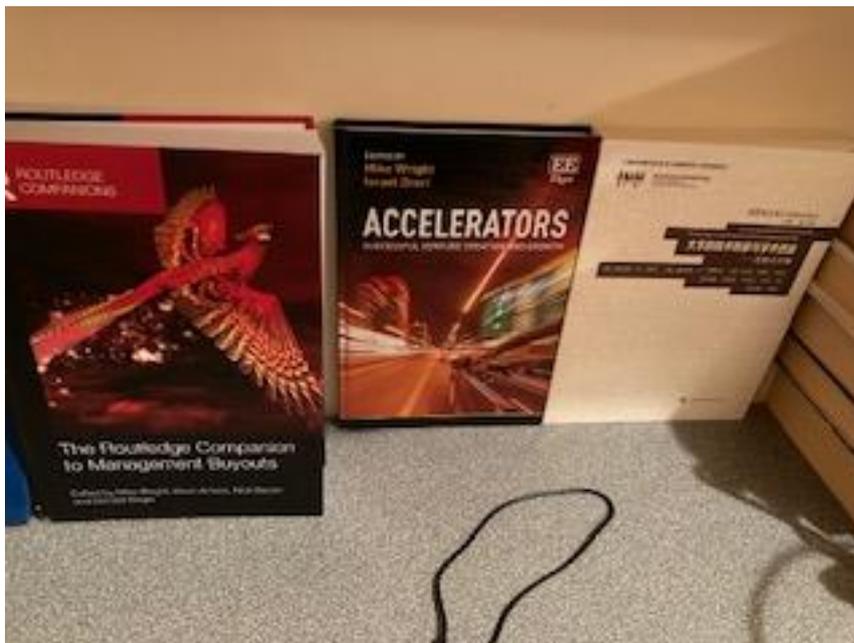
One of Mike's 'to do' lists. Photo credit: Maryse Wright

He used to write very quickly – he was so to the point, very concise in his thoughts. He would often joke that coming from Derbyshire, he could not speak properly – but his English was wonderful, always precise. He helped other people to write. He would know their peculiarities, for instance, the 'typical mistakes' Eastern European scholars would make in English, omitting or confusing indefinite and definite articles.

Mike was not only writing academic texts! When his son Julien was learning reading at primary school, Mike wrote a story for him about football - a passion his son had from the early years. In 2017, Mike cycled from central France to Moselle – a few months before he passed away he wrote the story about this bike ride describing the places he visited and their people – 10 days, 700 km.

Mike reached a phenomenal amount of milestones throughout his academic life, but he was particularly proud of becoming a Fellow of the British Academy in 2016 and setting up the Centre for Management Buy-out Research in 1986. He was especially proud of the doctor honoris causa degree conferred to him by Ghent University in March 2006 and of the visiting Professor position he held in Ghent for many years.

He wrote and edited over 40 books – but 5 books were organized by him in his home leaning against the wall, and may have represented a particular attachment to him – especially the book on Management Buyouts (1985) with John Coyne when the Centre for Management Buy-out Research was started. Mike was very passionate about the series of books he wrote on the topic of ‘how to get published.’



Mike's books selection. Photo credit: Maryse Wright

His study desks were an organized mess because he knew exactly where everything was, but nobody was allowed to displace anything. He never wanted to get rid of books. He used to support Manchester United, and once Maryse gave away the old book about Man United to the school fair. Mike saw it in the stalls and bought it back. He used to read Private Eye, and always wanted to keep the old copies.

Mike mentored many young scholars, but one of his own mentors earlier in his career was Denis O'Brien, his MA Supervisor at Durham. Mike also worked as a research assistant for him. From earlier days in his career, he was also close to Brian Chiplin at Nottingham and the rumour has it that Brian originally advised him not to study management buyouts (which Mike disregarded).

Mike was good at creating the 'glue' between people. He forged teams of co-authors, kept 'nagging' at them to produce the top outcome, and to keep the relationships going, he talked independently to several people, that is how he got the glue holding.

Mike was fascinated by the different processes of doing PhD research – he had many PhD supervisions in different countries. This will ensure his ideas shared with early career researchers will continue to flourish in the years to come.