

EVANS, THOMAS (1897 - 1963), alderman, education and hospital administrator

Name: Thomas Evans
Date of birth: 1897
Date of death: 1963
Spouse: Miriam Evans (née Davies)
Child: Rhys Evans
Parent: Catherine Evans
Parent: William Evans
Gender: Male
Occupation: alderman, education and hospital administrator
Area of activity: Education; Medicine; Public and Social Service, Civil Administration
Author: Walter Thomas Morgan

Born in Twyn Carno, Rhymney, Glamorganshire, 9 September 1897, son of William Evans, miner, and Catherine, his wife; his father came originally from Hirwaun, Aberdare, though his roots were in Cardiganshire. Thomas was educated at elementary schools in Rhymney, but left at the age of 12 to work in a brickworks at Rhymney. He afterwards became a miner and worked for 14 years underground at the Rhymney, Oakdale and Pengam collieries till the 1926 coal strike, when he purchased a dairy and milk distributing business at Pengam. In 1927 he entered public life when he won a seat for the Labour party on the Gelligaer U.D.C., which he retained until he retired in 1950. He was for 15 years the leader of the Labour group on the council and was chairman on two occasions. In 1928 he won a seat on the Glamorgan county council, representing the Hengoed ward. His remarkable grasp of financial administration was soon recognised and in 1939 he was elected chairman of the county finance committee to which post he was re-elected 24 times in succession for the rest of his life so that he was popularly known as 'the chancellor of the exchequer' for Glamorgan. During the year 1952-53 he was chairman of the council, during which period the Welsh local authorities made him a public presentation in recognition of his long and distinguished services to local government in Wales.

But he did not confine himself to county administration. He was a member of the governing body and at one time chairman of Lewis' School, Pengam. For over 20 years he was chairman of the finance committee of the University of Wales Council and he was a member of the council of the Welsh National School of Medicine (as it was then known). His services to education were recognised by the University of Wales when he was awarded the honorary degree of LL.D. in 1958. His achievements in hospital administration were also notable. In 1948 he was the first chairman of the Rhymney and Sirhowy hospitals management board. He was appointed chairman in 1955 of the board of governors of the United Cardiff hospitals, including the teaching hospital. At the time of his death he was vice-chairman of the Welsh Regional Hospitals Board and he had been chairman of its finance and establishment committee since 1952. In 1952 he was the last chairman of the now defunct Industrial Development Council for Wales and Monmouthshire; he was a part-time member of the South Wales Electricity Board and formerly represented the Gelligaer U.D.C. on the Rhymney Valley Drainage Board; he had been a Glamorgan county magistrate since 1936. In recognition of his outstanding services in public life, he was made a C.B.E. in 1956.

Despite the exacting demands of his public duties, alderman Evans was assiduous in his attendance at the services of his chapel, Nazareth Welsh Presbyterian Church, Glan-y-nant, Pengam, where he was an elder. He was a man of great dignity and integrity and a deeply committed Christian. It may truly be said that the chief motivation of his life of service to his fellowmen was rooted in his Christian faith.

In 1918 he married Miriam Davies, schoolmistress, at New Tredegar, who predeceased him in 1953. There were three children of the marriage. One son, Rhys, a law student at Aberystwyth, a fighter pilot in the R.A.F. was killed on D-Day 1944.

He died 14 January 1963.

Author

Walter Thomas Morgan, (1912 - 1990)

Sources

Western Mail, 15 January 1963

South Wales Argus, 15 January 1963

Rhymney Valley Express, 19 and 26 January 1963

The Biographical Index of W. W. Price, Aberdâr

and information kindly supplied by his daughter Miss Nonn Evans

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