



## Gone Home: Laszlo Nagy (1921 - 2009)

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It is with deep sorrow that we announce the death of Dr. Laszlo Nagy, former Secretary General of WOSM, on Friday 18 December in Geneva. He played a vital role in reforming World Scouting and his memory will remain with us for a long time.

Laszlo Nagy, born in 1921 in Budapest, arrived in Switzerland in 1947. It was late on in life, in 1955, at the age of 34, that he started on a professional career. Recipient of a scholarship and a researcher at the Graduate Institute of International Studies, he tried journalism. Occasional contributor to the *Journal de Genève*, he became the German correspondent and then a main reporter for the *Gazette de Lausanne*. In 1966, he changed his professional direction, undertaking a critical study financed by the Ford Foundation on the crisis facing youth movements and more particularly World Scouting. He became Secretary General of the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) on 1 May 1968, and served in this position until 1988.

Laszlo is credited as being, more than any other person, the creator of the modern World Organization of the Scout Movement. In his ground-breaking Report on World Scouting of 1967, he analysed the Movement and put it into a contemporary context. In other words, he took what Baden-Powell had created in 1907 and reinterpreted it in the context of the late 1960s. Under his leadership, WOSM adopted a complete revision of its Constitution in 1975; over 90% of that still stands today, one reason being its "minimalistic" style and content. He was also instrumental in the formulation of the purpose of Scouting: "to contribute to the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual potentials".

During his tenure as Secretary General, World Scouting expanded enormously, despite limited resources. Its success was due in no small part to the integration of community development into its programmes as a means of making these more relevant to the needs of young people in their local, national and international communities. The establishment of the World Scout Foundation also provided a corner stone to meet the future financial needs of the Movement. The first tentative steps 'Towards a Strategy for Scouting', which culminated finally in the adoption of the mission statement in 1999 and of the Strategy itself in 2002, began during this same period.

After his retirement from World Scouting, Laszlo was engaged as President of the Jacobs Foundation, which specialises in problems facing adolescents. In 1997, Laszlo returned to his first love: writing. He is the author of several books including *250 Million Scouts*, *Scoutisme Mondial: un centenaire qui se porte bien* (World Scouting: a hundred years old and still going strong) and

*l'Art de rebondir: le tour de monde en 80 ans* (The art of rebounding: around the world in 80 years).

Laszlo is survived by his wife Monique and three children, Antoine, Laurent and Valerie.