

obituary

Jonathan Gili

Jonathan Gili, who died at the age of 61 at Hammersmith Hospital on October 1, was one of the most distinguished and original film-makers ever to work in BBC documentaries.

In a BBC television career of 30 years he produced and directed memorable films like *Westminster*, *To the World's End*, *Quest for Sergeant Miller*, *The Queen Mother's Obituary*, *The Oklahoma Outlaw*, *Tales of the Eiffel Tower*, *Debutantes*, *Typhoid Mary*



and *Gold Rush*. The last five films are just a fraction of his output for *Timewatch*, the strand for which he worked for the last 12 years of his BBC career.

Jonathan's character suffused his work. Like him, his films were witty, intelligent, original, gentle and full of compassion and understanding for the human condition.

That the majority of them were made while he struggled with a life threatening illness – he was diagnosed with leukaemia and was given just two years to live nearly 20 years ago – is nothing short of miraculous. Few human beings are tested as Jonathan was, and his ability never to

sink into cynicism, always to face the uncertainty of his future with humour and courage is an example that all of us who were lucky enough to have known him will remember for the rest of our lives.

Jonathan, in the way he lived his life, personified values to which we all aspire, but to which the vast majority of us fall far short every day.

At his retirement dinner earlier this year, I said in a speech that the feeling of love for Jonathan that existed in the room was almost palpable. At his packed funeral, on October 8 in the beautiful village of Litton Cheney in Dorset, that same feeling was

even stronger, tinged with the knowledge that we shall never see his like again.

Laurence Rees

● **A service in celebration of the life of Andrea Wonfor**, who was the first female director of programmes at Granada Television and who was behind Channel 4's *The Tube*, is to be held on Friday November 5 at St Nicholas Cathedral, Newcastle upon Tyne at 4.30pm for a 5pm start.

Anybody wishing to attend should email Maggie.Marfitt-Smith@itv.com by Friday, October 22.