The Society also regrets to announce the death of: John Warburton Thompson

John had been a Member of The Society since 1958 when at the Royal College of Surgeons in England. Since his retirement from the NHS in 1990, John continued to work in the field of chronic pain. He will be greatly missed by his family, friends and colleagues.

The Department of Pharmacology and Centre for Neuroscience at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada regrets to announce the sudden and untimely passing of Bill Dryden. Bill grew up in Paisley, just west of Glasgow, and received a BSc in Pharmacy from the University of Glasgow and a PhD in Pharmacology from the University of Strathclyde. His doctoral thesis with Mary Dawson involved the development of tissue culture systems in which to examine drug effects on dissociated cells. Bill’s early studies of the development of acetylcholine sensitivity in skeletal muscle ignited his interest in neuromuscular physiology and developmental neurobiology, which led him to postdoctoral studies with Sol Erulkar at the University of Pennsylvania.

Bill returned to Strathclyde as a lecturer in 1971. There he continued his work with skeletal muscle in culture paying particular attention to studies of the actions of various types of bungarotoxin. In related work, he published some of the first electrophysiological recordings from dissociated central neurons in culture. He moved to Canada in 1976 where he was appointed to the faculty in the Department of Pharmacology at the University of Alberta and where he remained until his retirement in 2008. Bill’s interest in neuromuscular physiology continued to dominate his research, and this led to a sabbatical with Ricardo Miledi in London in 1982. His interest in tissue culture led to our extensive collaborations where we explored regulation of excitability of adult autonomic neurons by growth factors. More recently, we worked to develop defined medium organotypic cultures of rat spinal cord; a technique which now dominates my own research. Bill also collaborated with the late Susan Dunn in studies of multiple ACh binding sites and their relationship to subconductances in the nicotinic acetylcholine receptor. Sadly, this important work may now never be published.

He was acting chair of the department between 1991 and 1992 and served as Director of the Centre for Neuroscience between 1995 and 1999. He was a well-regarded teacher and mentor to graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and faculty (including myself).

Bill spent his retirement years in the small, picturesque town of Sooke on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Here he was able to pursue his many hobbies including gardening, bagpipes and model trains. He was a true renaissance man who had an encyclopedic-like knowledge of many branches of science, literature, world history, language and architecture. Several of my colleagues remarked “he was the smartest man I ever met”, we also joked that “he could probably recite the whole works of Bobbie Burns – in Latin”. Bill Dryden was the soul of our department and we are planning to officially name our teaching laboratories in his honour. His memorial service was attended by childhood friends from Scotland as well as faculty members from Strathclyde. Several of us commented, “If Bill was your friend, he was your best friend”. His insight, breadth of knowledge, collegiality and sense of humour will be fondly remembered. He is survived by his wife Angela, three children Colin, Gillian and Anna and grandchild, Jackson.

Peter Smith

William Dryden

1941 – 2012

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