

Jasper McKee

June 6 1930 - January 6 2024

Jasper passed away peacefully at Ulster Hospital Belfast. He will be deeply missed by his son Conor (Katrina); daughter Siobhan (Russell); grandchildren Christa, Colton (Megan) and Jade; great grandchildren Liam, Royce and Jasper. He will also be missed by extended family members, many great friends, students and colleagues that he inspired, touched and encouraged along the way.

Dr. J.S.C (Jasper) McKee was educated at Campbell College and the Queen's University of Belfast, where he obtained his BSc in Physics (1952) and PhD in Theoretical Physics (1956). An assistant lectureship at Queen's was followed by seventeen years at Birmingham University in England where he became a senior lecturer in physics and held a DSc, prior to taking up his position as professor of physics and director of the Accelerator Laboratory at the University of Manitoba (U of M) in Winnipeg, Canada in 1974. As a Fulbright Scholar, he spent two stints as a visiting professor to the University of California, Berkeley in the late sixties. For twenty years Jasper also served as a weekly science correspondent for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Since 1996, he was Professor Emeritus in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at U of M. He also served as an appointed member of the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology of Canada and was a member of the Board of Directors of the Atomic Energy of Canada.

Jasper often referred to himself as a "peripatetic physicist." The word "peripatetic" arises from the career of Aristotle in the Lyceum in Ancient Athens, and his association with the "peripatetic school," an informal institution whose members conducted philosophical and scientific inquiries. Jasper conducted teaching and research at universities in four countries on two continents. He published over 240 scientific papers and five books and edited volumes of conference proceedings. A collection of his papers are held at the U of M Archives and Special Collections.

Jasper was everything a university professor should be. An engaging, brilliant conversationalist, public speaker, and enthusiastic teacher, always open to innovative ideas and with a gift for soliciting the best from younger staff and students. His optimistic, cheerful disposition and wit made him a pleasure to be with. At the University Club everyone regularly pulled up extra chairs to join the table where everyone was laughing, the "McKee" table. Eventually a larger table seating twelve was needed – the so-called "Come and Go" table was established (because people arrived and left for lunch at arbitrary times). As an indication of the positive influence Jasper had towards others, Jasper was awarded the McNeil Medal of the Royal Society of Canada (1995) for the communication of science to both students and lay public in Canada.

Dad (Jasper) was a dedicated father and husband who enjoyed family gatherings, parties and any occasion. He often invited his students home at Christmas or on other occasions to join family parties; always treated to Mum's (Christine's) delicious homemade marvels. A generous host, Jasper was attentive and entertaining, rarely seen without a wee dram or telling a tall tale. He diligently replenished the empty glass of any guest and his famous "paradise punch" was a legendary ice breaker.

Jasper was awarded the Kirkby Medal of the Canadian Association of Physicists (CAP) and was a fellow of the Institute of Physics (UK) using the trademark PPhys in Canada. He was a Past President of CAP and the past Editor of the professional journal *Physics in Canada*.

Jasper served as the president of the Canadian Club of Winnipeg. He was also a liberal candidate in the 1988 and 1990 provincial general elections. An enthusiastic and gregarious member of the Westminster United Church, he frequently attended church services whenever his busy schedule allowed. His community service was recognized by an Outreach Award from the U of M (1986) and a Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal (2002).

Jasper will be laid to rest with his wife, Christine, in Dorchester, England. A private family committal ceremony will take place in the near future. Jasper will be sorely missed but will remain forever in our hearts.