



Obituary

OBITUARY: Prof. Jack Cunningham, PhD, OC



The International Organization for Medical Physics (IOMP) informs with great sadness that Prof. John Robert “Jack” Cunningham, honoured with the IOMP Marie Curie Award in 2006, passed away on 4 January 2020 in his home in Canada.

Prof. Jack Cunningham was recipient of the IOMP recognition as one of the 50 medical physicists who made outstanding contribution during the 50 years, at the 50th Anniversary of IOMP Conference on Medical Physics (Brighton, UK, 2013).

Prof. Jack Cunningham graduated Engineering Physics at the University of Saskatchewan and was awarded a PhD in Physics at the University of Toronto in 1955. From 1958 he worked at the Physics Division of the Ontario Cancer Institute at the Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto, and remained Chief of Clinical Physics and Professor at the University of Toronto until 1989. Jack was a Founding Member and Fellow of the Canadian College of Physicists in Medicine.

Prof. Jack Cunningham was involved in the building of one of the first Telecobalt treatment units. He developed pioneering methods for calculating absorbed dose from radiation beams. The theory of his algorithms and related software are still used today for treatment planning in Radiation Oncology. **The book of Harold Johns and Jack Cunningham ‘The Physics of Radiology’, first published in 1953,**

became one of the most well-known educational resources in the profession and was re-published six times (in 4 Editions) in 1961, 1964, 1966, 1969, 1974, and 1983. This book has educated thousands of medical physicists around the world.

The enormous contribution of Prof. Jack Cunningham to the profession and its education has been widely recognised. He was Fellow of the Canadian Association of Physicists, Fellow of the American Association of Physicists in Medicine and Life Member of the Association of Medical Physicists of India. Among his awards are the AAPM “William D. Coolidge Award” in 1988; the CAP/COMP Memorial Peter Kirkby Medal in 2002; the COMP Gold Medal Award for “outstanding contributions to the field of medical physics in Canada” in 2006. In 2005 he was installed as an Officer of the Order of Canada, recognizing him as “one of Canada’s most distinguished medical physicists”. In 2006 the International Organization for Medical Physics (IOMP) awarded him with the highest international award of the profession “Marie Curie Award”.

Those who have worked with Jack will never forget his friendly smile and professional advice. Prof. Jack Cunningham was a unique professional, pioneer and educator in medical physics. He will be missed by our global professional community!

Jack leaves his wife, five children and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

On behalf of the IOMP Executive Committee we are sending deepest condolences to the family of Prof. Jack Cunningham.

IOMP expresses heartfelt thanks to Prof. Jack Cunningham for his enormous contribution to the medical physics profession!

IOMP Past-President, IUPESM Vice-President
Slavik Tabakov

IOMP President
Madan Rehani