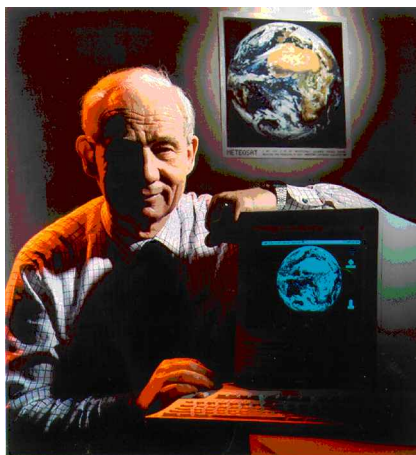


## In Memoriam William James (Jim) Megaw 1924–1998



Jim Megaw died on July 9, 1998. Jim was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland. He served with the Royal Engineers from 1942 to 1947, mostly in India. In 1951 he graduated from the University of Liverpool with a B.Sc. in Physics and began work in health and particle physics at the Atomic Research Establishment in Harwell, England. During this time, Jim also collaborated with the aerosol group at University College in Dublin, Ireland. In 1971 he joined the Physics Department at York University in Toronto, Ontario, Canada as a full professor. Jim was named a Fellow of the Institute of Physics and received a D.Sc. from the University of Liverpool in 1973. At York, he served as Director of the Centre for Research on Environmental Quality from 1974 to 1984 and chairman of the Physics Department from 1979 to 1989. He was a member of the editorial board for the *Journal of Aerosol Science* from 1981 to 1988. He retired from York as Professor Emeritus in 1989 with over 80 scientific publications.

Early in his career, Jim pioneered experimental work in the deposition properties of atmospheric aerosols with particular emphasis on radioisotopes in particles. As his interest in the atmospheric aerosol broadened, he realized the importance of understanding the background aerosol. When very little was known about the Arctic haze aerosol and the cleansing cycle of the Arctic atmosphere, Jim recognized that the summertime air over Greenland was potentially the most pristine in the Northern Hemisphere. He collaborated with Danish colleagues to study the properties of the Northern Hemisphere background aerosol over Greenland for several years. His aerosol research also included the study of the separation of fine particles in an electric field, the effect of particles on the color of atmospheric hazes, the importance of aerosols to clouds, and the influence of relative humidity on particle deposition in the human respiratory tract.

Following the Chernobyl accident in 1986, Jim used his background in atomic energy and

health physics as well as his concern for the environment to write a book on the safety of nuclear power. *How Safe? Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and Beyond* offered the layman an understanding of the Chernobyl incident, the generation of nuclear power and the impact of ionizing radiation on health. It also provided a factual assessment of the risks associated with power generation from conventional sources.

Jim's teaching career at York University was both vigorous and compassionate. With his fundamental understanding of physics and people he was able to make science inviting. His classes were always in high demand. Probably the finest aspect of Jim's teaching career was his enormous effort to interest and encourage women to study physics and make their careers in science. He traveled extensively to promote science to women and he organized annual workshops for

high school girls to let them experience the adventure of studying science. One young woman physicist said about Jim, "It is he who is responsible for seeding me with the idea that one's life work could also be one's life joy."

Jim could captivate and amuse people. All those who knew him will keep with them his enthusiasm for life and work. Jim married in 1946. He was a loving husband, a proud father of a daughter and two sons, and a devoted grandfather of seven.

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