

Dr Roy Albert Webster.

3.02.1933 – 2.04.2017



Roy Webster died peacefully on the 2nd April 2017. He was born in Hatfield in 1933 and on leaving school started work at Herts Pharmaceuticals which soon became part of Smith & Nephew. His ability was evident and after initial part-time study he took a BSc in Physiology at University College London. He then completed a PhD on the pharmacology of tetanus, with Desmond Laurence as his supervisor. In 1962 he was appointed a Lecturer, and later Senior Lecturer, in the then unmerged UCL Department of Pharmacology, headed by H O Schild, FRS.

With Heinz Schild's active encouragement, Roy Webster played a central part in the planning and introduction in 1967 of one of the earliest Pharmacology BSc degrees in the UK. As part of this, he initiated and for many years organised an advanced undergraduate course on Neuropharmacology. This led him to edit (and write much of) a widely-used textbook on Neurotransmitters, Drugs and Brain Function, developed from an earlier volume co-edited with Chris Jordan. He was an excellent teacher, thorough and conscientious, and generations of undergraduate and postgraduate students are in his debt. A staunch supporter of the British Pharmacological Society, becoming a member in 1964, he served on the Editorial Board of the *British Journal of Pharmacology* and co-authored, with Mick Bakhle, Donald Straughan and Ian Morton, two important reports on the organization of pharmacology in Great Britain. These were published in the Journal in 1974 and 1986. He was also an active member of the University of London's Board of Studies in Pharmacology, serving in succession as Secretary, Deputy Chairman and Chairman.

All this was in parallel with a steady output of research, based for the most part on his outstanding experimental skill in a range of whole animal techniques. His early work focussed on the *in vivo* confirmation of the identity and physiological role of the newly discovered amino-acid neurotransmitters in the spinal cord. Later he went on to study drugs, notably the benzodiazepines in collaboration with Sandra Vellucci, that interact with the receptors for these transmitters in specific regions of the CNS.

Roy was an exemplar of the kind of all-round university teacher who flourished in a world in which universities were still collegiate rather than corporate. His colleagues will recall, and

be grateful for, his willingness to take on and succeed at essential administrative tasks at the same time as maintaining his teaching and research. Above all, those fortunate to work closely with him will remember his unfailing helpfulness, steadiness and collegiality. He is sadly missed.

He took great joy and sustenance in his family. Married to the Reverend Canon Diane Webster, they had three children, Marion, Graham and Keith, and nine grandchildren they adored. On his retirement, they moved first to Burley and then to Brockenhurst in the New Forest where Roy took pleasure in helping Diane in her parish work and in tending their delightful garden and an allotment.

Donald Jenkinson