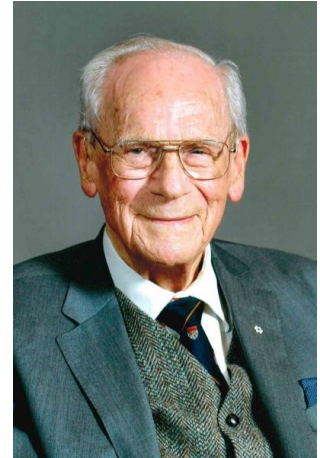


Dr. Robert G.E. Murray 1919-2022

On February 18th, 2022 the international microbiology community lost a valued and dedicated member. Dr. Murray was born in Ruislip, England on May 19, 1919. He came to Montreal in 1930 where his father, Dr. Everitt G.D. Murray, was Professor of Bacteriology and Immunology at McGill University (1930-1955). Dr. Murray was educated at McGill University (1936-1938), Cambridge University (Pathology and Bacteriology, 1941) and McGill University (Medicine, 1943). He served briefly in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps and then went to the University of Western Ontario in 1945 as a Lecturer in Bacteriology. He was appointed Professor and Head of the Department of Bacteriology and Immunology (1949-1974) and Chief of the Microbiology Service, Victoria Hospital in London (1948-1965). Thereafter he served as Professor of Microbiology and Immunology (1974-1984) and Professor Emeritus after his retirement in 1984.



Societies and their journals, particularly the Canadian and American Societies, continued to be important to Dr. Murray over the years. He was chairman of the Founding Committee for the Canadian Society of Microbiologists, 1950-1951 and Founding President, 1951-1952. The Society, he said, was "a much-needed catalyst and unifier for the diverse applied and basic microbiologists of the country". He remained an active member of the Society throughout his scientific career and was elected an honorary member in 1985. In 2011 the name of the CSM Award was permanently changed to the CSM Murray Award for Career Achievement, in recognition of the careers in microbiology of Drs. E.G.D. and R.G.E. Murray. Dr. Murray also persuaded the National Research Council of Canada that a microbiology journal was a justifiable publication and was appointed the Founding Editor of the Canadian Journal of Microbiology, 1954-1960.

Prior to this appointment, he was a member of the editorial board of the Journal of Bacteriology, 1951-1954, and again from 1980-1986. His involvement as Editor of Bacteriological (later Microbiological, then Microbiology and Molecular Biology) Reviews, 1969-1979, increased his interest in the affairs of the American Society for Microbiology. He was elected President, 1972-1973, and an honorary member in 1988. He was also elected an honorary member of the Society for Applied Bacteriology in 1988.

One of Dr. Murray's passions in life was taxonomy. He inherited this interest honestly from his father, E.G.D. Murray, who was a trustee of Bergey's Manual of Determinative Bacteriology, 1936-1964. After his father's death in 1964, he was asked to join the Bergey's Manual Board of Trustees, and thus began another long association of a Murray with Bergey's Manual. He was Chairman of the Board of Trustees from 1976-1990. He was a member of the International Committee for Systematic Bacteriology (International Association of Microbiological Societies) since 1962, and chairman from 1982-1990. He was elected a life member of ICSB in 1990. He was Associate Editor of the International Journal of Systematic Bacteriology, 1982-1990 and Editor from 1991-1994. In 1993 he was awarded the Bergey Medal, given by the Bergey's Manual Trust for contributions to bacterial taxonomy. He was an ardent contributor back to science, in the form of leadership in societies and on editorial boards. He wrote in his autobiographical article (Annual Reviews in Microbiology 1988 42: 1-35) about his years of service as a member of journal editorial boards: "...I learned the basics of editing from experienced

colleagues and by doing it.”; “...a scientific editor’s crucial job was not just to adjudicate the reports of referees but was to help the authors to do their best.”; “It was no mean exercise in diplomacy to deal with the sensitivities of the undoubted authorities in their fields, both authors and referees, who could produce not only an appalling text but also a distressing narrowness of view.” To those who knew him, this was a reflection of his 'tell it directly like he saw it' attitude along with his challenge to everyone to look at the bigger picture in all your science. He was a giant presence never afraid to give his valuable input.

It is a challenge to summarize Dr. Murray's interest in and contributions to research in microbiology. He concentrated on the structure and function of components of bacterial cells, bacterial cytology, and bacterial taxonomy. He made major contributions to the combination of information from electron microscopy with biochemical analysis of structures (notably paracrystalline S-layers), biological and systematic studies of radiation-resistant bacteria and overall assessment of problems in the taxonomy of bacteria. His contributions to microbiology continued as a member of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Bacterial Diseases Network of the Centres of Excellence (1989-1998). He received one of the most rewarding collegial recognitions when a new species of *Deinococcus* was named after him in 1997 (*Deinococcus murrayi*) as was a new genus (*Robertmurraya*) in a clade of *Bacillus* species in 2020.

Dr. Murray's research in bacterial cytology, structure and function, and systematics and taxonomy brought numerous honours and awards, including the Harrison Prize, Royal Society of Canada (shared with C.F. Robinow), 1957; Fellowship in the Royal Society of Canada, 1958; the Canadian Society of Microbiologists Award, 1963; election to the American Academy of Microbiology, 1973; the Flavelle Medal, Royal Society of Canada, 1984; the J. Roger Porter Award, American Society for Microbiology (U.S. Federation of Culture Collections), 1987; honorary DSc degrees from the Universities of Western Ontario, Guelph, Victoria and McGill. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1998.

He was active in his later years as a Professor Emeritus and never failed to ask stimulating questions at department seminars. In 1999 the department initiated the annual R.G.E. Murray Lectureship and also named the seminars in the department as the R.G.E. Murray Seminar Series. Two other awards were also established in the department: the R.G.E. Murray Graduate Scholarship in Microbiology and Immunology and the R.G.E. Murray Microbiology and Immunology Graduate Student Seminar Award. Thus Dr. Murray continues to be an inspiration to students and faculty members. His presence will be missed.

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