

OBITUARIES

John M. Blatt

John M. Blatt, born in Vienna on 23 November 1921, died on 16 March 1990 in Haifa, Israel, at a time when he was actively and enthusiastically pursuing research projects in econometrics and teaching applied mathematics at Haifa University.

John attended school in Vienna until the *Anschluss* in 1938, when his family emigrated to the US. He earned his BA from the University of Cincinnati in 1942 and PhDs in physics from Princeton and Cornell in 1946. That year he joined the staff at MIT as research associate, and though his primary interest was statistical mechanics, the opportunity to collaborate with Victor Weisskopf on a nuclear physics text proved irresistible. The fruit of that effort, *Theoretical Nuclear Physics*, was widely acclaimed as an outstanding text and served to initiate a generation of graduate students in that field.

In 1948 John joined the faculty of the University of Illinois, and in 1953 he accepted a position at the University of Sydney, where he began a fruitful collaboration with M.R. Schafroth and Stuart Butler. Two years later he assumed the chair for applied mathematics at the University of New South Wales, a position he held until his retirement in 1984.

John's early years in Sydney were among his most productive. In that decade he published 50 of his more than 100 articles and also wrote several books: *Theory of Superconductivity*, two books on FORTRAN programming and, with Butler, *A Modern Introduction to Physics*, an elementary text used extensively in the high schools of New South Wales.

After his retirement, John and his wife Ruth moved to Haifa. There he gave regular lectures to graduate students at Haifa University on optimal control theory and other topics in applied mathematics. Even prior to his retirement John's interests had shifted to economics; all his publications since 1978, including two books, *Dynamic Economic Systems* and *Investment Confidence and Business Cycles*, were in that field.

John was a superb teacher as well as a lucid and entertaining lecturer, able to clarify and explain difficult concepts. He was also an accomplished pianist, and wherever he went he soon formed a circle of friends with whom he played the chamber music of Mozart, Dvořák, Schubert and other classical composers.

John will be remembered by his friends and colleagues for his enthusiastic pursuit of science, his uncompromising honesty and scrupulous fairness in personal and professional relations, an ebullient, fine sense of humor, a deep sense of social responsibility and an effervescent love of life.

FRANK J. BLATT

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Gale J. Young

Gale J. Young, former assistant director of Oak Ridge National Laboratory, died on 21 May 1990, at the age of 78. He was best known as one of Eugene Wigner's key collaborators in the design of the original Hanford plutonium processing reactors.

Young was born on a farm in Baroda, Michigan. He acquired a BSE degree in electrical engineering at the Milwaukee School of Engineering. He entered the University of Chicago in 1933 and in 1936 received an MS in mathematical physics.

Young and several other mathematical physics students at Chicago were influenced by Nicholas Rashevsky, the Russian-born physicist who developed the field of mathematical biophysics. Young became one of Rashevsky's most successful disciples, contributing to all of the then-active fields of mathematical biophysics.

Young left Chicago in 1940 to teach physics and mathematics at Olivet College, in Olivet, Michigan. Then in early 1942, when Wigner was gathering a group of theorists to help him design plutonium-producing reactors, I recommended Young to him as one of the most talented physicists I knew. Wigner and Young hit it off, and Wigner came to depend heavily on Young's mathematical ingenuity and engineering judgment. After the Hanford project was finished, Young continued to explore various reactor designs, and he was one of the first to investigate the use of fission energy to generate electricity.

Young remained at the Metallurgical Laboratory at the University of Chicago until 1946, when he moved to the Clinton Laboratories, as ORNL was then known. In 1948 Young and John Menke founded Nuclear Development Associates, the first privately owned nuclear engineering firm. He was director of research and senior vice president for NDA. When NDA was absorbed by the United Nuclear Company he stayed on with United Nuclear.

Young returned to ORNL in 1962 as an assistant laboratory director and a senior member of the director's staff. Young's wide knowledge and experience was especially helpful in ORNL's explorations of various peaceful applications of nuclear energy, particularly in using it to desalinate seawater.

Gale Young was unique among the early pioneers of nuclear energy. Beneath his shy manner lurked a wry wit and an unusual mathematical and engineering talent. He will be sorely missed.

ALVIN M. WEINBERG

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Arthur M. Crooker

Arthur Mervyn Crooker, professor emeritus of physics at the University of British Columbia, died on 24 March 1990, at the age of 80.

Crooker graduated with a BA from MacMaster University in 1930. He continued on at the University of Toronto, where he received his PhD in 1935. He then spent two years as a researcher at King's College of the University of London. In 1937 he was appointed to the faculty at the University of British Columbia, where he conducted research in optics and atomic spectroscopy.

During World War II Crooker went on a leave of absence to take the position of chief physicist in the Research Enterprises Ltd, where he designed optical instruments for the Canadian forces. As a major in the Canadian Army at the end of the war, he was an investigator of captured enemy equipment in Germany. After the war he returned to British Columbia, where he was a professor until his retirement in 1974.

Arthur and his late wife, Helen, were gracious hosts to his graduate students and friends in their home. During the last few years of his life he was severely limited by the onset of Parkinson's disease. He is remembered by his many friends and students as a quiet, modest and caring human being.

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