



Dora "Dolly" Cohen and Dr. "Monty" Cohen.

## DR. MONTAGUE COHEN

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By Marika Asimakopulos and Frances Groen

Dr. Montague Cohen (1925-2002) was editing volume eleven of *Fontanus* when he died on January 28, 2002. This was the second issue that Monty had edited, and he had worked diligently, despite increasingly poor health, to bring this volume to fruition. It is fitting that the Management and Editorial Boards of *Fontanus* dedicate this volume in his honour. In doing so, we are acknowledging not only his devotion to *Fontanus* but also his dedication to all that is of value in libraries and academic culture.

Monty was foremost a scientist, and he continued to work actively in his chosen field of radiology and medical physics until he died. Following a B.Sc. and Ph.D. at London University, Imperial College, he held positions in research physics and as a medical physicist of the London Hospital (1948-1961), the International Atomic Energy Agency (1961-1966), the London Hospital and London Medical College (1966-1975). In 1975, McGill managed to attract Monty to a professorship in the Departments of Radiation Oncology and Physics, and in 1979 he was appointed Director of the Medical Physics Unit. He held memberships in many professional societies in several countries, received various awards, including the prestigious Röntgen Prize of the British Institute of Radiology. He authored more than 100 papers, and several books and was frequently interviewed regarding radiation and radiation hazards – as a scientist he was devoted to increasing knowledge and understanding of science within the general population. For Monty the understanding of science was a joy, and he wished to share that joy with others.

Monty was a precise and demanding library user, concerned with the development of the collections in his field of medical and radiation physics and with the inadequacies of the library classification and cataloguing system to deal effectively with his specialty. He enlightened librarians on many aspects of our system, in the best interests of the Library. He further supported the Libraries of McGill University through his work as a member of the Mossman Lectures Committee, where he was a most active member. He and his gracious wife, Dolly, played host to a series of distinguished Mossman lecturers, such as Richard S. Westfall, Historian and Professor Emeritus, Indiana University; Geoffrey Lloyd, Master of Darwin College, Cambridge; Edwin Krupp, Director, Griffith Observatory, Los Angeles, and the Rev. Stanley Jaki, Distinguished Professor, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ. At the dinners Monty and Dolly so graciously hosted, the conversation was stimulating and witty, with Monty's keen questioning and social grace always at play.

In 1998 Monty was appointed the editor of *Fontanus* following the resignation of Dr. Hans Möller, and he approached this new and unknown volunteer effort with his characteristic enthusiasm, diligence, and intellectual rigour. These efforts – the Mossman Committee, the editorship of *Fontanus* and his continuing commitment to libraries – were part of his devotion to intellectual and cultural values.

Monty was a devoted scholar on the subject of Ernest Rutherford and served as Curator of the Physics Department's Rutherford Museum from 1984 until his death. The Museum houses original research apparatus designed and used by Ernest Rutherford during his nine years at McGill, 1898-1907. As its able Curator,

he would give visitors fascinating talks about Rutherford and the displays. In 1996 he published a *Guide to the Museum* detailing the contents of the display cabinets and their use.

In 2001, the Department of Physics created the virtual Ernest Rutherford Museum site, where visitors can view digital facsimiles of the surviving Rutherford artifacts online (<http://www.physics.mcgill.ca/museum/>). Valuing the importance of the collection, the Department of Physics appointed Professor S.K. Mark to succeed Dr. Cohen as curator of the Rutherford Museum (and the McPherson Collection displaying scientific instruments for teaching and research).

Along with Dr. Denis Melançon and Mr. Clifford Williamson, he was involved in the McCord Museum's exhibition *The Inside Story: One Hundred Years of X-Rays*, Montreal, May 12 to November 12, 1995. As consultant and contributor, he provided the historical and scientific background for the exhibition. He also gave the X-Ray Centennial Lectures at the University of Saskatchewan, lectured at the British Institute of Radiology and at McGill as the Mossman lecturer.

The members of the Management and Editorial Boards of *Fontanus* and of the Mossman Committee extend their deepest sympathy to Monty's wife, Dolly and their children Laurence, Robert and Andrew.