

OBITUARY



Professor Gary Roach

Born: 8 October 1933 Died: 17 March 2012

Gary Roach was born in Wales in 1933. After a short spell in Persia, as it then was, the family returned to the UK at the outbreak of World War II and settled in Nottinghamshire, where Gary attended Southwell Minster School. While there, he showed great prowess in rugby union and, but for a serious injury, would have had a trial for the Welsh Under-21s.

Gary gained his BSc honours degree from the University of Wales in 1955. He then joined the education branch of the Royal Air Force, before taking up an appointment as a research mathematician with the British Petroleum Company. During this period he studied part-time at Birkbeck College in London and was awarded an MSc with distinction in 1960. He gained his PhD from the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST) in 1964. His thesis, entitled 'Dynamical theory of viscous tides in close binary systems', led to the immediate award of a Fellowship of the Royal Astronomical Society. After a short spell as visiting professor at the University of British Columbia, he joined the Department of Mathematics at the University of Strathclyde in 1967. He was appointed professor in 1979 and emeritus professor in 1996.

His research interests lay in the area of applied analysis. He had a long and distinguished list of publications including books, conference proceedings and papers. One of the earliest entries in the list is the book *Green's functions*, published in 1970. A second edition appeared in 1981 and remains a standard reference book in its field. Gary's experience in industry, both in the early days and through subsequent consultancy with the Ministry of Defence, Ferranti, ICI and British Gas, led to the study of many problems of practical importance in whose solution the tools of applied analysis, notably functional analysis and operator theory, have a major role to play.

A principal theme of Gary's research was scattering theory, particularly inverse problems related to image improvement in radar, sonar and ultrasonic testing. He established fruitful collaborations with colleagues in locations as diverse as Delaware, Bonn, Patras, Athens, Calgary and Witwatersrand.

The University of Strathclyde had a long-standing exchange agreement with the Technical University of Łódź, which Gary espoused with enthusiasm. There were regular visits by staff in both directions, while three students came from Łódź to study for Strathclyde PhDs under Gary's direction. In recognition of his contributions to the exchange agreement and his eminence in the field of applied analysis, Gary was awarded an honorary ScD degree by Łódź in 1993. This was in addition to the DSc he was awarded by the University of Manchester in 1991. Other distinctions included election as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1977.

Gary continued writing in his retirement. His last book, co-authored with two of his Greek collaborators, appeared in March 2012. Sadly he never saw the final version in print. In all, he wrote five books, edited eight others, authored or co-authored over 150 papers and supervised 20 PhD students. He was also heavily involved with various journals.

Gary gave loyal service to many bodies at the local, national and international levels. Within the University of Strathclyde, he was head of the department of mathematics, before becoming the first dean of the new, enlarged Faculty of Science from 1982 to 1985. He played an active part in the Edinburgh Mathematical Society, serving as Treasurer (1972–76) and then as President in Session 1981–82. He also served as Convener of the Conference of Professors of Applied Mathematics.

He was involved in many activities beyond mathematics. One such was the Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde Military Education Committee, of which he was Vice-Convener from 1992 to 1996 and Convener in Session 1996–97.

In 1997 Gary was Deacon of the Incorporation of Bonnetmakers and Dyers, one of the 14 incorporated crafts of the Trades House of Glasgow. In this role he played an active part in the city's affairs for that year, with an emphasis on charitable work and education. From 1996 he was a member of the Trades House of Glasgow School Craft Project Committee, visiting schools and taking a keen interest in what the pupils produced. At his instigation the committee introduced an award (the Deacon Convener's Achievement Award) to recognise outstanding work.

In 1983 Gary joined the Nomads Club. This body, formed in 1895, exists as a forum for discussion and debate, and Gary presented an annual paper to the club, on a matter chosen by the president. This gave Gary considerable pleasure, owing to the subject usually having absolutely nothing to do with science or mathematics! He was President in Session 1998–99 and was made an honorary member in 2010.

In addition to all these activities, Gary pursued various hobbies. After mathematics, classical music was perhaps his greatest passion. He was also a member of a philatelic club called the Vikings and specialized in the stamps of the Faroe Islands. He enjoyed walking in the hills, and bagged many Munros.

Gary is survived by his wife Isobel, whom he met while working in Kuwait and married in 1960. They spent most of their married life in the Stirlingshire village of Fintry, which Gary loved dearly.

Professor Adam McBride, OBE