

IN MEMORIAM

ANGUS GEORGE PEARSON

Angus George Pearson was born in Collina, New Brunswick, Canada, just a few miles from where his ancestors settled when they emigrated from England and Scotland in 1815-1822. His forefathers farmed royal grants, many of which are still occupied by family members.

Angus' father was a farmer in a community named Pearsonville (because of the preponderance of Pearsons there). His mother came from the nearby community of Collina, where her father was a farmer-blacksmith. Angus was born on July 27, 1915, the day his father landed in England, a Sergeant-Major in the Canadian armed forces during World War I. Father and son met each other some 2-1/2 years later. Since he had been seriously wounded in the war, Angus' father soon gave up farming, and the family moved to Fredericton, the capitol of New Brunswick. There Angus' father became a postal clerk while Angus started to school, an activity he enjoyed most of his life. He graduated from Fredericton High School and entered the University of New Brunswick, having received both County and the Leonard Foundation Scholarships. Besides devoting himself to his studies as a physics major, he was commissioned in the ROTC and was a medal winner for the UNB rifle team. He had many other activities, including tennis, partridge hunting, hiking and cross-country skiing in the forests, paddling his boat on the expansive St. John River, playing saxophone in a small dance band, reading, and operating his amateur radio transmitter/receiver.

In 1937 when Angus' father retired due to ill health, the family decided to move to the southern United States. They looked for a 'small' city with a good university and good physics department, since Angus was ready to begin his fourth year of college. They moved to Austin, Texas. At The University of Texas, Angus obtained his B.A. in physics in 1938 and entered graduate school. In 1941, he met his future wife, Erna

Herzog, a student in his freshman physics lab. Being a very conscientious person, he waited until she was no longer his student before asking her for a date.

During 1942-1944 of World War II, Angus enlisted in the Air Corps and was placed in the Reserves so as to teach aircraft recognition, theory of flight, and navigation in the ground school of the Coleman Flying School in Coleman, Texas. Then on August 7, 1943, Angus and Erna were married in Kerrville, Texas, and Angus was naturalized as a citizen of the United States. Later he worked for the National Cotton Council in Dallas and Austin on a war project testing the feasibility of using microwaves to kill insects and their eggs in packaged goods. He finished the war as a Testing Machine Operator for the Military Physics Laboratory at The University of Texas.

Just before his orals in 1948, some physicists working on the same problem at another institution published the results of their work. This made Angus' work ineligible for a Ph.D. so he was awarded an M.A. degree. This disappointment was replaced by joy when daughter Ann was born two weeks after graduation. From 1948-1950, Angus was an Instructor in the Chemistry Department at SMU, teaching physical chemistry. The second daughter, Ellen, was born in March of 1950. In the Fall of 1950, the Pearsons moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where Angus became Assistant Professor of Physics at Emory University. These were busy, happy years with Angus sponsoring the Physics Honorary Society, Sigma Pi Sigma (Angus and Erna were both charter members of The University of Texas chapter), and teaching new courses every year.

By this time Angus had become interested in a different field of physics, quantum mechanics. In 1957, Angus and Erna decided to return to Austin so Angus could attend the University full time and learn the new developments in quantum, which included learning much about computers. He received a Welch fellowship as he studied under F. A. Matsen, as well as Research Assistantships. From 1964-1966, while Angus was finishing his Ph.D., he taught computer programming as a T.A. in the Mathematics Department.

Angus' Ph.D. was awarded in June, 1966, when the Pearsons were also invited to join the U.T. Computer Sciences Department. Angus was appointed as an Assistant Professor and Erna was half-time Instructor and half-time Research Scientist at the Computation Center.

Angus was primarily interested in undergraduate students and worked as Undergraduate Adviser while on the faculty. He hired and supervised the student assistants and the T.A.'s involved in the freshman and sophomore courses. In 1973, he was promoted to Associate Professor.

In the early 1960's he became interested in the international language Esperanto. In 1973, Angus and Erna went to Belgrade where they attended an International Esperanto Congress.

In the fall of 1974, Angus had his first heart attack and had to stay home. He retired in 1976 so he and Erna could travel together. They took several trips to New Brunswick and he was able to attend his UNB class's 45th anniversary. He died quietly on December 4, 1983, with his family around him. He left his body to The University of Texas Medical School.



Handwritten signature of William H. Cunningham in cursive script.

William H. Cunningham, President
The University of Texas at Austin

Handwritten signature of H. Paul Kelley in cursive script.

H. Paul Kelley, Secretary
The General Faculty

This Memorial Resolution was prepared by a Special Committee consisting of Professors David M. Young, Jr. (Chairman), Dr. Norman Martin, and Dr. Charles Warlick.

Appendix: List of Publications of Angus Pearson

"Some Potential-Energy Surfaces of H Computed with Generalized Gaussian Orbitals," (with R. D. Poshusta and J. C. Browne) J. Chem. Phys. 44 1815 (1966).

"Teaching Pulley Systems," (abstract) Amer. J. Phys. 20 p. 393 (1952).

"Temperature Coefficient of Resistance of Sodium-Ammonia Solutions," (abstract) Bull. Am. Phys. Soc. 22, p. 15 (1947).

"High Frequency Electric Fields as Lethal Agents for Insects"; (with Harold H. Webber and Robert P. Wagner), J. Economic Entomology, 39, p. 487 (1946).

Co-author of ELASTIC manual (with E. Pearson).