

IN MEMORIAM
HUGH S. FORREST

Professor Hugh Sommerville Forrest, Ph.D. led a long and colorful life (April 28, 1924–November 16, 2018). According to the Scottish newspaper *The Herald*, “He was the fifth and youngest son of Archibald and Margaret Watson Forrest. His father was a master butcher who owned a shop in Victoria Road on the south side of Glasgow.”

Hugh received a B.Sc. (First Class Honors) from the University of Glasgow in 1944 after which he moved to London to study therapeutic chemical compounds at the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR) at Mill Hill. His work there led to his being awarded a Ph.D. by the University of London in 1947.

His research in London gave him an interest in a group of organic compounds called pteridines, and he provided evidence that they might be natural inhibitors of bacterial growth and thus possibly of medical importance. From NIMR, he moved on to the Department of Chemistry at Cambridge University to work under a fellow Glaswegian, Alexander (later Lord) Todd, winner of the 1957 Nobel Prize in Chemistry.

Having completed a second Ph.D., he immediately left for the U.S., having been awarded a U.S. Public Health Service fellowship to continue his studies at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech). At Caltech he continued research into pteridines, most notably biopterin—a coenzyme of many neurobiologically significant enzymes. Among his colleagues at Caltech was James Watson, who had returned from Cambridge after his work on DNA with Francis Crick. In later life, Hugh remarked that his greatest claim to fame as a scientist was having been James Watson’s regular tennis partner.

In 1955, he moved to The University of Texas as a post-doctoral fellow, becoming a Professor in 1962 and eventually Chair of the Department of Zoology from 1974 to 1978.

His research in Austin revealed surprising interactions of pteridines with nucleic acids and showed that naturally occurring pteridines can interfere with DNA and RNA synthesis in developing animals. In the 1970s, his research moved into new areas focused on the molecular structure of the chromosome. Much of this later work was performed on the fruit fly, *Drosophila*, an organism which has long been the workhorse for new discoveries in genetics and molecular biology.

Hugh inspired and served as mentor for many distinguished graduate students who went on to professorships and research positions at prestigious organizations. His students include a MacArthur Fellow and two recent Nobel Laureates in Medicine (Dr Michael W. Young and Dr James P. Allison, respectively winners of the 2017 and 2018 Nobel Prizes). Hugh also taught thousands of undergraduates, many of whom took his “physiology for poets” class. A highlight of this class was his custom of wearing his Scottish kilt for the last lecture.

In 1976, he became editor of the academic journal, *Biochemical Genetics*, which he continued to edit even after he retired from UT Austin in 2000 and became Professor Emeritus. Remarkably, he served as editor for over thirty years and was, to say the least, very disappointed when the publisher decided that he was too old at eighty-eight to continue. Among his honors, he was awarded a D.Sc. degree from the University of London in 1970 and was elected as a Fellow of the scholarly Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1979.

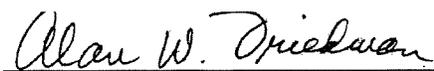
Hugh remained a passionate Scot all his life despite leaving the country in 1944—any meeting in the Central Texas area aimed at Scottish expatriates was almost guaranteed to attract

his presence. Hugh relished attending the annual Robert Burns Supper (in honor of the Scottish poet) every January in Austin.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Archibald and Margaret Watson Peden Forrest; his wife, Rosamond Baker; and his four older brothers, Donald, Sam, Archie, and Bob. He is survived by his children Eleanor Forrest and her husband David Ahern; Anne Forrest, Ph.D., and her husband Michael Crider; and Hugh Watson Forrest, Ph.D., (Honorary) and his wife Vivian Forrest, as well as six grandchildren: Duncan Ahern, Brendan Ahern, Rosamond Ahern, Luke Van Buskirk, Hugh Wei Forrest, and Daniel Crider.



Gregory L. Fenves, President
The University of Texas at Austin



Alan W. Friedman, Secretary
The General Faculty

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Harold Zakon (Chair), George Bittner, and Nicholas Priebe.