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NEWS

MEMORIAL OF GEORGE F. WALKER

The death of George F. Walker on February 17, 1970, during a cardiac operation shocked and saddened his many friends in this country. Born October 24, 1916, he appeared to have many years ahead of him to continue the studies for which he was well known and respected in clay mineralogical circles throughout the world. He is survived by his wife Anne and two sons, Keith and Neil, respectively 23 and 22 yr. old.

George took a B.Sc. degree (1st Class Honors) in 1939; Ph.D., 1948; and D.Sc., 1959, all in the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. He was a fellow of the Mineralogical Society of America and of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute, a member of the Clay Minerals Society and of the Mineralogical Society (London), a Councillor and Foundation President of the Australian Clay Minerals Society, and Vice-President of A.I.P.E.A. (International Association for Clay Mineral Studies).

In Great Britain he held research positions with the British Ceramic Research Association (1941–45), and the Macaulay Institute for Soil Research (1945–51). He took a prominent part in the founding and development of the Clay Minerals Group in Great Britain from 1947 until 1951 when he and his family moved to Australia. Subsequently he held various positions with the C.S.I.R.O. in Melbourne, where, at the time of his death, he had the title of Chief Research Scientist in the Division of Applied Mineralogy. He headed a team of about a dozen scientists and assistants working particularly on clay–organic systems, and the use of clays in composite materials.

George Walker was well-known to clay scientists in the U.S.A. and was an invited guest at North American Clay Minerals Conferences in 1955, 1960, and 1963. He was planning a 9-month visit to the Soil Science Department of Michigan State University beginning in September, 1970, and many were looking forward to seeing him again at the 1970 meeting of the Clay Minerals Society.

His publications are mainly in the field of clay mineralogy. He is best known for his work on the structure and properties of vermiculite. He contributed the well-known chapters on this mineral in the two editions of "X-Ray Identification and Crystal Structures of Clay Minerals" and (with W. F. Cole) in "The Differential Thermal Investigation of Clays," published by the Mineralogical Society. He has contributed also to the "Encyclopedia of Soil Science" to be published by Springer-Verlag. His earlier publications included several papers on Scottish soil clays. In more recent years he dealt with many aspects of vermiculite–organic complexes. Several of his recent papers indicated new areas of interest, particularly those on organic complexes of nickel cyanide and on the application of nuclear magnetic resonance to the study of interlayer water in layer silicates.

The passing of George Walker leaves a gap in the ranks of clay mineralogists which will not easily be filled and many friends mourn his early departure from amongst us.

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