

## **James Kerr Grant**

Dr James Kerr Grant - Jim or simply 'JKG' as he was known to his staff – died on 6 January 2004 at the age of 87 after a short illness.

Jim Grant was born in Dundee, educated in Edinburgh and spent most of his working life in Glasgow. He graduated as a chemist, and after service in the Second World War he started work in the Biochemistry Department at the University of Edinburgh with Professor Guy Marrian, who introduced him to steroid biochemistry. It was the 1950s and Jim played a significant role in working out the pathways of adrenal steroidogenesis and the enzymes that control the process. In 1956 he spent a year in Professor F Lynen's Laboratory in the Max Planck Institute for Cell Chemistry in Munich honing his steroid expertise.

In 1960 Jim was recruited by the University of Glasgow as a senior lecturer to establish and run the Department of Steroid Biochemistry. This was based in Glasgow Royal Infirmary and it had the dual roles of research/teaching and NHS service provision. He remained in this post until he retired as Reader in Steroid Biochemistry in 1981. For twenty years Jim's department was one of five specialist steroid units in the UK, which together developed clinical steroid biochemistry. His expertise led him to be appointed from 1970 to 1974 as a WHO consultant to the Iranian Ministry of Health.

Jim's department had an impressive research output, and attracted research students and fellows from throughout the world. He continued his interest in adrenal steroids and also developed an internationally renowned team working on androgen metabolism and action in the prostate. At the time of his retirement, Jim had published more than 120 original papers and supervised or assisted 19 students to gain a PhD in steroid biochemistry. Several of Jim's team went on to have successful careers in research, clinical biochemistry or industry. Jim's academic life was broad and included long periods on the Editorial Boards of the Journals Endocrinology and Steroid Biochemistry. He was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1980 and an Honorary Member of the Society for Endocrinology in 1981. Jim's NHS department developed a range of more than 20 steroid assays using the emerging techniques of chromatography, fluorimetry and immunoassay. These were validated in both analytical and clinical terms and subject to rigorous quality control and update.

Jim was a man of tremendous energy and vision. His enthusiasm and attention to detail encouraged all to the highest standards of professionalism, but he could be a hard task-master. He was a great communicator and a genius at teaching with no more than a piece of chalk and a blackboard.

Outside work Jim displayed the same energy and enthusiasm. He was a gentleman in the true sense of the word, and a perfect host. He was also a tireless campaigner for a range of causes including Amnesty International and the Civic Trust for Milngavie, the town in which he made his home. Jim and his wife Ella have two daughters, four grandchildren and one great grandchild.

With the death of Jim Grant the Society has lost a great character, who will be remembered with affection by his former colleagues. His legacy, however, lives on in modern clinical and steroid biochemistry.

**Mike Wallace  
Graham Beastall**

***James Kerr Grant BSc, PhD (Edinburgh), FRSC. Born 21 March 1916; Elected FRSE 3 March 1980; Died 6 January 2004.***