

Thursday, November 24, 2011

J. Fraser Mustard, M.D., Ph.D.



A pioneer of platelet research and an international authority on the thromboembolic complications of atherosclerosis, Fraser Mustard died at his home in Toronto, Canada, on November 16, 2011 at age 84. Fraser was a founding member of the International Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis, and as President of the Society in 1981, he organized its VIIIth Congress in Toronto. He received the Society's highest award, the Robert P. Grant medal, in 1987.

Fraser completed his M.D. degree in 1953 at the University of Toronto, and his Ph.D. at Cambridge where he began his study of blood platelets. Back in Toronto, he became a research scientist at Sunnybrook Hospital, set up collaborative research with Harry Rowsell at the Ontario Veterinary College in Guelph, Ontario, and in 1962 was the main initiator of the Blood and Vascular Disease Research Unit at the University of Toronto. Work at this site included early studies of the inhibitory effect of aspirin on platelet function.

Fraser's outstanding accomplishments include his role in the founding of the innovative medical school at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, with the introduction there of problem-based learning, a new concept in 1966. He was the Dean and Vice President of the Faculty of Health Sciences from 1972 to 1982. At both McMaster and Toronto, his laboratory attracted trainees and scientists from across the

globe; many trainees established strong independent research careers when they returned home. Some remained at McMaster, including Raelene Kinlough-Rathbone who went on to become a faculty member and Fraser's "right hand" in the organization of their laboratory. Research in the laboratory was wide ranging as basic mechanisms of platelet function were explored in vitro and in vivo, facilitated by the development of methods to isolate functional platelets and of models of thrombosis.

In 1982, Fraser became the founding President of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research where for 14 action-packed years he worked tirelessly to create (and raise funds for) an intellectually elitist "institute without walls" that brought together the brightest minds he could find to pursue high-quality interdisciplinary research. As a determined champion of innovation, he established programs in such diverse fields as Artificial Intelligence, Cosmology, Evolutionary Biology, Population Health, Superconductivity, Economic Growth and Policy, and Human Development. Throughout these years, Fraser also chaired, or was a member of, numerous government committees and Royal Commissions.

In the past two decades, he became a dynamic advocate for the importance of investing in every child at an early age, traveled the world promoting early child development, and authored influential reports on this subject, including "The Early Years: Reversing the Real Brain Drain" with Margaret Norrie McCain in 1999, and two further publications in 2007 and 2011. At the time of his death, he was actively involved in plans for formation of an Institute for Human Development.

Fraser was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, a Companion of the Order of Canada, a member of the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame and the recipient of innumerable awards and honorary degrees.

His biography, "J. Fraser Mustard – Connections and Careers" was written by his longtime collaborator and colleague, Marian Packham, and published in 2010. Predeceased by his wife Betty, he is survived by his six children and nine grandchildren.

Margaret Rand  
Marian Packham  
Raelene Kinlough-Rathbone