Eric Reid (1922–2010)

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Eric Reid was born in Aberdeen and studied chemistry at the University from 1939 to 1943 before working at the Lister Institute, London, until 1946.

He completed his PhD at UCL in 1949 and then moved to Cambridge (with F.C. Young), where he embarked on a second PhD, Cambridge apparently not recognizing the one from UCL. As was customary in those days, Eric (and his wife Joan, whom he had met in London) then did a postdoc research at Emory University in the USA, from 1952 to 1953.

On his return to the UK in 1953, Eric spent 11 years working at the Chester Beatty Research Institute, mainly on cancer, having over the years switched towards biochemistry, particularly nucleic acid metabolism, subcellular and membrane biochemistry in normal and cancerous tissue.

In 1964, he joined the Battersea College of Technology (Joan had already been in the Chemistry Department at Battersea since 1953) where he founded the Biochemistry Unit. The award of the Royal Charter in 1966 to Battersea – forming the new University of Surrey – was a moment of celebration, but also a new opportunity for the fledgling Biochemistry Department. The euphoria of the Charter was followed by a great disappointment for Eric, as he was unsuccessful in securing the Chair to the new department, but remained as a reader with a small but thriving group working on subcellular biochemistry. In 1971, the whole department moved to the new campus in Guildford. Not entirely happy within the new department (whose main topic was drug metabolism), Eric was successful in securing a substantial (in those days) pump-priming grant from the Wolfson Foundation to develop novel approaches in clinical bioanalysis and so gained the autonomy he needed.

As the head of the Wolfson Bioanalytical Centre (formed in 1973), Eric steered it during a very active, productive and academically successful period in the areas of analytical methodology and subcellular biochemistry. Building on expertise in both areas, the Centre organized annual international symposia and published the proceedings in the notable *Subcellular Methodology and Analytical Techniques (Methodological Surveys)* series.

The late 1970s and early 1980s were a difficult period for Eric as the Wolfson Bioanalytical Centre became absorbed within a larger Robens Institute and the analytical area dominated by new high-technology companies. Eric took early retirement in 1982, a time of drastic University cuts. During his academic career, he had published numerous peer-reviewed articles, attended and presented work at international meetings and edited the proceedings of all of the conferences he had organized.

Ever the survivor, Eric had plans! With Joan’s support and recruitment of trustees, he started Guildford Academic Associates (GAA) a charity devoted initially to continuing the Bioanalytical Conferences and publication of *Methodological Surveys*. GAA also endowed the ‘Guildford Bench Methodology Fund’ within the Biochemical Society. Eventually the Chromatographic Society took over the Bioanalytical Conferences. Eric then immersed himself in the truly charitable work of GAA. Now, he and Joan were essentially donating their life’s savings and estate to worthy causes; everything from poor Indian communities, prisoner rehabilitation and the arts (particularly ballet). Despite his advancing years, it seemed that these were some of the most rewarding years of his career.

From the Reids’ lifestyle, it was obvious that Eric had no interest in material things. He would skimp on seemingly essential items and yet delight in donating thousands to worthy causes.

Ever the devoted husband, Eric now had to care for Joan when, early in the 2000s, she was diagnosed with dementia. He was very concerned for her welfare should he predecease her and made extensive arrangement for her care. With typical generosity, Eric paid tribute to a dear friend Gordon Hartman by endowing two plaques for the trees and shrubs on the Surrey campus. Following Joan’s death in 2008, GAA, under Eric’s guidance, turned to his life’s interest in education to the dissemination of substantial sums from the estate to fund new universities, with particular focus on students from non-academic backgrounds. The trustees of GAA will be proud to continue to follow this very noble legacy of Eric Reid.