

## Michael (Mike) J. Newlands 1931-2021

Mike passed away after a brief illness in Bridgetown, Barbados on Sept. 26, 2021. Mike made an enormous contribution to Memorial University and the Chemistry department, through his teaching and administrative roles. He was Head of Department from 1972-1981. He will be missed by many both at Memorial and at UWI.

Mike Newlands was born and raised in Stevenage in the UK, and went to school at Alleyne Grammar from 1942-1950. He obtained his school certificate and higher school certificate, and was Head Boy 1949-1950. He attended Downing College, University of Cambridge (1950-57) and obtained B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees. He then joined the Chemistry Department at UMIST (University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology) in 1958 as Lecturer. He lectured and supervised graduate students. He then joined the Chemistry Department at Memorial University in 1967 as Professor of Chemistry, teaching and supervising graduate students until his retirement in 1990. His role as Head was pivotal in terms of pushing the academic and research profile of the department, as it grew in the early years of its development in the new campus setting in 1967. He then moved to Barbados, and found that the academic environment was still in his blood, and joined the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill campus teaching first year students.



A glimpse from the past.

## **What Retirement from Memorial has Meant for Me**

### **From 'Distillates, April, 1998**

The greatest change when I left Memorial was the climatic change from Newfoundland to Barbados where the temperature seldom drops below 20 C at night and where midday temperatures in the high 20s and low 30s are the norm.

As those of you who know me will guess, I have not slowed down much. I currently teach two semesters of an Introductory Chemistry course at a level approximating Memorial's first year. High Schools in the English speaking territories of the Caribbean are very variable and the advice given to students about the subjects they should take for university entrance is also very variable. The result is that my students may have from no chemistry at all to failed A level (about grade 12/13 level). They may come from as far north as Bermuda, as far south as Trinidad and Tobago and as far west as Belize (Barbados is the most easterly territory) with occasionally someone from Canada, the UK or the USA thrown in for good measure.

The students are a very pleasant mix, most of them keen to succeed in what they are doing, many of them away from home for the first time. Teaching a group like this is an excellent way to learn a lot about the various islands very quickly. I have now taught in Australia, England, Newfoundland and the Caribbean and my feeling is that the students from the Caribbean are the most outward going of all - not the noisiest, the Aussies hold that record!

Although Barbados is a long way from Europe and North America, e-mail, the Internet and the World Wide Web allow our students and instructors to keep up to date, which is a good thing because the university budget keeps the library holdings to a minimum. Also it is very

difficult for our students to afford to buy textbooks, even the so-called Third World editions.

It is wonderful to be able to take a swim most mornings at around 6 o'clock, never to have to worry about clearing snow, and not have to take too much notice of the rain, which is warm anyhow. Gardening can be fun here because plants grow so fast - but so do the weeds - and many of the fruit trees bear all the year around. I am still surprised to see flowers and fruits in all stages of ripeness on the same tree (limes, for example).

Cultural activities flourish here, sometimes too vigorously so that it is difficult to take in everything one would like to. And of course there is bridge a very international game here.

So I may have retired, but I am probably even busier that I was in St. John's.

Come and visit Barbados some time. You will enjoy it.

Mike Newlands

Submitted by  
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