



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

**Memorial Tribute**  
**to**  
**Arthur Porter, OC, PhD, DSc (Hon), FRSC, FIEE**  
**February 26, 2010**

**Moved by: Professor Jean Zu, Chair, Mechanical and Industrial Engineering**

**Seconded by: Ridha Ben Mrad, Professor, Mechanical and Industrial Engineering**

Be it resolved that the Council of the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering record with deep regret the death on February 26, 2010, of Dr. Arthur Porter, former Professor and Head, Industrial Engineering, University of Toronto, 1961-1976.

Born in Ulverston, England, in 1910, Arthur Porter was a pioneer in interdisciplinary research. As a third-year student at the University of Manchester, he worked with Douglas Hartree, one of the most influential computer pioneers of his day. He was also a colleague of Marshall McLuhan. In Canada, Dr. Porter was Head of Industrial Engineering at the University of Toronto, 1961-1968, 1973-1975, Academic Commissioner at the University of Western Ontario, 1970-1972, and Dean of Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan, 1958-1961.

Arthur Porter obtained his PhD at the University of Manchester in 1936 and was named a Commonwealth Fund Fellow at MIT, 1937-1939. He graduated in physics from Manchester University in the summer of 1933 and then proceeded to graduate studies under Douglas Hartree. As part of his PhD thesis he developed an analog differential analyzer, which he constructed from Meccano parts. From 1939 to 1946, he served with the Admiralty Research Laboratory and the National Physical Laboratory on war related work. Dr. Porter was Professor of Instrument Technology at Royal Military College, England, 1946-1949, Head of Research at Ferranti Ltd in Toronto, 1949-1955, and returned to the United Kingdom to become Professor in Electrical Engineering at Imperial College, London, 1955-1958.

In Canada, he spearheaded the start of modern biomedical engineering—his joint request for funding with Wendell Macleod in 1960 at the University of Saskatchewan marked the seminal moment in the start of modern biomedical engineering in Canada.

Dr. Porter's contributions to research were widely recognized. Among other things, he served on the Glassco Royal Commission in Canada. He was Chair of the Science Committee at the Ontario Science Centre, Chair of the science advisory committee for EXPO 67, Chair of The Royal Commission on Electric Power Planning for Ontario, 1977-1981, and was inducted as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1970. His autobiography *So Many Hills to Climb: My Journey as a Computer Pioneer* is filled with vivid accounts of both his personal experiences and professional accomplishments.

Not only did Dr. Porter remain intellectually brilliant, creative, and involved, but his earlier work has ongoing relevance. The following statement made in 1978, in the Interim Electric Power Planning report, has astonishing contemporary relevance and could have been written today: "The conditions during the period 1983-1993 and beyond will necessitate an expanding search for innovative and more sustainable sources of energy, a more efficient elegant and wise use of energy and most importantly the realization that our energy balance may depend on a remolding

and reshaping of our institutions, organizations and value systems. Diversity, flexibility and resiliency should characterize our energy supply systems.”

Predeceased by his wife Patricia in 2007, Arthur Porter died peacefully at the age of 99 years, after suffering a stroke in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, on February 26, 2010.

Be it further resolved that a record of his service be inscribed in the minutes of this Council, and that a copy be sent to his family as an expression of the respect and gratitude of the members of Council.

*[Prepared by Professor Emeritus Andrew K.S. Jardine]*