H. B. S. (Basil) Cooke

MAY 3, 2018



H. B. S. (Basil) Cooke passed away peacefully on Thursday, May 3, 2018 at 102 years of age.

Born in Johannesburg, Basil studied in South Africa and at Cambridge University in England. For most of the years from 1938 to 1961 Basil taught in the Department of Geology at the University of the Witwatersrand, except for service in the South African Airforce during the Second World War.

In 1961 the Cooke family moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Basil lectured at Dalhousie University, and served as Dean of the Faculties of Arts and Science for 6 years. When he retired in 1981, Dorette and Basil moved to White Rock, British Columbia which became their base from which to continue their global travels. They were very active in the local community, and for several years Basil served as President of the local branch of the Royal Commonwealth Society.

While Basil's formal education was as a geologist, academic communities around the world knew him best as one of the pioneering African palaeontologists. His many publications ranged from a university text book written in 1938 to a chapter in Hominin Environments in the East African Pliocene in 2006.

Basil's many academic achievements were recognized with an Honorary LL.D. from Dalhousie University in 1982, and an Honorary D.Sc. from the University of

the Witwatersrand in 1998. The Royal Society of South Africa published a Festschrift to him in 2006.

Basil was predeceased by Dorette, his wife of more than 60 years. He leaves behind two sons, Christopher (Sharron) and Patrick (Phyllis), and three grandsons, Brandon, Christian, and Justin.

Special thanks from the Cooke family to all of the staff of the Residence at Morgan Heights for the exceptional care and comfort given to our father in his final years.

You are invited to leave a personal message of condolence for the family.

Messages of Condolence

Sending lots of love to all the Cooke family. 102 years is an incredible age and your Dad and Granddad lived a very impressive life, academically and personally. He and Dorette truly seemed like two halves of the same person. They seemed to know exactly what each other was thinking and I remember the way that they would complete each other’s sentences, as tho’ one.
I also have him to thank for the 16mm movie footage of my Mom and Dad’s wedding. Without him, I’m sure there would have been none and it is absolutely a family treasure.

— Tessa Moore

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