

Edward A. Mason: A Memorable Friend and Colleague

Ed Mason was full of life! His passing has cast a shadow on the lives of all of us who knew him, a shadow that is lightened only by the pleasure that he brought to us in the time we spent with him. I first met Ed in 1963, when I went on a job interview at the University of Maryland. Ed was then at the Institute for Molecular Physics, and was a very famous professor. I was especially eager to meet him, and was prepared for an intimidating presence who would overwhelm me with his erudition and knowledge of atomic and molecular scattering, equations of state, and transport theory. Instead I was delighted to find someone who knew as many jokes as I did, or even more, who had a wonderful laugh and an easy, but serious way, of talking about science. Ed's presence at Maryland made my decision to join the faculty there a very easy one. The few years we spent together at College Park were among the most wonderful of my life. Ed could always be counted upon for insights into physics and to show me how to take scientific struggles and competitions with grace and humor. Not only that, he gave me some of the clearest explanations of complex thermodynamic ideas that I have ever heard. His successor at Maryland is Jan Sengers, who is coeditor of this issue in Ed's memory.

Although Ed left Maryland for Brown, his frequent visits and those of his wife, Ann, made his departure more bearable. There was a frequent communication of jokes, funny stories, and scientific work that kept him among us, always in spirit, if not always in person. My own time with Ed and with his family increased when I began my many visits to Brown to work on a book with Joseph Kestin. Joseph and Ed had developed a rich scientific life together which combined a bit of their individual styles—Joseph's serious approach and Ed's more humorous but equally knowledgeable approach to scientific questions combined to make a visit with them together a professional adventure. They both were extraordinarily smart and quick, with high standards, so that time in their company at Brown was an education in experimental and theoretical molecular physics, not to mention European and American history—especially the Civil War period—and

more esoteric things like brewing beer and how to survive in this difficult and complicated world in which we find ourselves. Ed has influenced a generation of younger scientists in ways that cannot be measured by the number of papers that people published with him or by the readership of his books. His depth, his vigor, his humor, his sense of the joy in life, his ability to understand both science and people on many levels, his career as a Morris dancer, his love of jokes and funny incidents, his tattoo—made him the most endearing of teachers and colleagues.

Ed's tragic and early death due to cancer has saddened our lives. It is our hope that this issue dedicated to the memory of Ed Mason will help to keep his memory alive and the sound of his voice echoing in our ears. He is not present in person but always present in spirit.

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