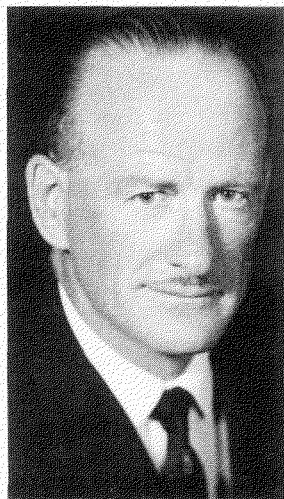


JAMES MERRITT HARRISON  
(1915-1990)



James Merritt Harrison died 6 July 1990, following a bicycle accident on 18 April 1990 that left him in a coma from which he never recovered.

Jim was born in Regina, Saskatchewan, on 20 September 1915. He was respected internationally both as a geologist and a representative of the Canadian scientific community through his many eminent contributions. Because of the respect in which Jim was held as a geologist and particularly as a science administrator, he received many honours for his work in government and with scientific organizations in Canada and abroad.

He was a director of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society 1963-67 and a vice-president of that society 1967-73. He was an original member of the Science Council of Canada in 1964. He was president of several societies: Geological Association of Canada, 1960-61; International Union of Geological Sciences, 1961; International Council of Scientific Unions, 1966-68; Royal Society of Canada, 1967-68; and Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, 1969-70. In 1971 he was made a Companion of the Order of Canada.

He was assistant director-general in Paris for UNESCO in the period 1973-76. He created training programs and promoted science, particularly in developing countries. He continued to further the ideals and activities of UNESCO through membership and chairmanship (1985-88) of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO.

In addition to the above, Jim received many other awards for his professional contributions: honorary doctorate degrees from six Canadian universities, the Kemp Memorial Gold Medal from Columbia University, Foreign Associate of the U.S. National Academy of Science, Honorary Fellow of the Geological Society of London, Gold Medal of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, Blaylock Medal of the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, Logan Medal of the Geological Association of Canada, Outstanding Achievement award of the Public Service of Canada, R.C. Wallace Medal of the University of Manitoba and Montgomery Fellow at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire.

Jim was employed as a summer field assistant with the Geological Survey of Canada (GSC) while he undertook Ph.D. studies at Queen's University; he was the first Ph.D. graduate in geological sciences at Queen's University, in 1943. He joined the Geological Survey of Canada in 1943, his fieldwork being entirely in the PreCambrian Shield areas, mainly northern Manitoba and the iron ranges of Labrador. He became director of the GSC in 1956 — its youngest director — and under his leadership the GSC developed and modernized substantially. He fully encouraged the development of new subsciences within geology, including the latest advances in radioactive dating of rocks, aerial photography, geophysical and geochemical surveys and the application of data process-

ing to geology. Some of Jim's innovations made possible several major scientific advances and contributed to the rapid exploration of Canada's remote frontier areas, including the Arctic Islands and the Polar Continental Shelf. While Jim Harrison was director, the GSC went through one of its most successful periods of expansion, with the enthusiastic introduction and application of new techniques and methods of geological investigations and new disciplines within geology. In 1964, Jim took on the responsibilities of assistant deputy minister (research) of the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys and in 1972 he became senior assistant deputy minister of the renamed Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Dr. John Parker, former chairman of the Board of Directors of the Arctic Institute of North America and presently chairman of the Board of Directors of the Science Institute of the Northwest Territories, has commented about Jim Harrison as follows: "Northern people have lost a great friend and dedicated supporter. He truly cared for people and nurtured their ideas. We are so fortunate to have had a person of Jim's international stature volunteering his services to our Institute. He had a deep knowledge and understanding of Canada's North and was a great friend and supporter of its people. He applied his tremendous knowledge of northern science as a member of the Science Advisory Board of the Northwest Territories from early 1981 and as its chairman from November 1982. He guided the Advisory Board through incorporation as the Science Institute of the Northwest Territories in 1985 and continued as chairman until early 1989. Jim Harrison brought to bear his strong people skills and excellent managerial abilities in the development of our Science Institute. He was a great innovator — ideas burst forth from his ever-inquiring mind. He was a warm and caring person, who treated all people fairly, who sought the best in everyone he dealt with and received in return their loyal support. While enjoying significant success as a result of his efforts, he sought no honours or attention for himself. Northern people were honoured by his demonstrated friendship and are grateful for his dedicated service."

Jim was a remarkable friend. He was indeed a modest man — I learned much about the man through our brown-bag club that met once a month (Maurice Haycock, Charlie Smith, Jim Harrison and myself). He had vision and integrity. He was loyal and supportive. He earned the respect of many people around the world who will be ever grateful for having known and been associated with him. He was an industrious person, always busy. On several occasions we planned a trip to the High Arctic, but unfortunately it always had to be delayed by commitments to his people and international concerns — we never did get that trip together.

Our deep respect and sympathy are extended to his wife, Herta, and family.

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