

## Parting with one of our own: Dr. Tomás Reader

It is with deep emotion that we inform you of the passing away of our friend and colleague, Dr. Tomás Reader, Professor in the Department of Physiology and member of the Centre for Research in Neurological Sciences (CRSN), Université de Montréal.

Tom was a “professor” in the noblest sense of the word. He was a generous and inspiring teacher, a prolific and stimulating researcher and an active member of both national and international organizations. The students who trained with him during their graduate studies remained very close. In many ways, his career was representative of a modern day academic. He completed both medical and graduate school training, obtaining a PhD degree with Dr. Eduardo de Robertis at Buenos Aires University in Argentina. He then arrived at Université de Montréal as a postdoctoral fellow and settled in as an independent researcher, working along the way with Herbert Jasper, Nico van Gelder, Laurent Descarries, Jean-Claude Lacaille, Réjean Couture, Jacques de Champlain, Mihai Botez, Robert Lalonde, Roger Butterworth, Robert Élie and Serge Rossignol. Within our institution, he was Full Professor of Physiology as well as a much-valued member of the Department of Psychiatry, Fernand-Seguin Research Centre at Louis-H. Lafontaine Hospital and Hôtel-Dieu Hospital Research Centre.

Tom’s research focused largely on the pharmacology and biophysics of cholinergic postsynaptic membranes and biogenic amines in the cerebral cortex. His approach was multifaceted, combining the perspectives of electrophysiology, neuroanatomy and neuropharmacology. During the last 5 years, he collaborated with Serge Rossignol on projects investigating the effects of spinalization on spinal cord neurotransmitters. He



**Dr. Tomás Reader**

passed away on May 7, 2002, midway through a CRSN symposium based on acetylcholine.

Throughout his career, teaching was particularly important to him, not only in the medical and physiology training programs, but also in our graduate studies program in neurological sciences. Because of his dual background in medicine and research, he had a functional perspective on the brain that he communicated clearly to appreciative students. He trained many fine researchers, supervising 18 graduate students and 9 postdoctoral fellows. His laboratory was host to visiting scientists from France, Germany, Venezuela, Morocco and elsewhere. He participated

in an impressive number of thesis committees, comprehensive examinations and student advisory committees. All concerned knew that, with Tom on their committee, they would face both a friendly smile and sharp, in-depth questions. They also knew that they could trust him to support them should they encounter some difficulty when responding. He was always ready to help edit an article, to correct and to teach.

Tom was a prolific researcher, publishing 130 scientific articles and several hundred abstracts in the proceedings of specialized symposia. His collaborations were extensive and much sought. Many a colleague saw their research benefit from his expertise. Beyond our institution, Tom collaborated with researchers from McGill University, the University of Alberta and the University of Saskatchewan, as well as from universities in Europe (Paris, Lyon), Puerto Rico (San Juan) and

South America (Caracas, Venezuela). He was long active in the American Society for Neurochemistry, particularly its Inter-American Cooperation Committee devoted to supporting research and teaching in Latin America. He taught regularly as an invited professor at the University of IVIC, Venezuela, and University of Bogotá, Colombia. He participated as an invited faculty on the First Basic Neurochemistry School, last September in Cordoba, Argentina, because he was supportive of all activities that would complement the graduate and undergraduate programs in Latin America. He was treasurer and president of the Finance Committee of the Canadian College of Neuropsychopharmacology and a member of their executive committee.

The photograph captures much of Tom's character. He was an exceptionally nice person, generous and broad in humour. Since the announcement of his death, colleagues throughout the world have expressed their condolences to his family and friends. He was a dedicated professor, a valued collaborator and a very fine colleague. His friendship, generosity and collegiality will be greatly missed.

We wish to take this opportunity to extend to his wife, Céline Germain, his mother, Rita Mautner, and his brother, Claudio (Juana), our most sincere condolences, as well as our assurance that we will do our utmost to keep Tom's memory alive.

It was Tom's wish to bequeath a portion of his estate to create the **Fonds Tomás Reader pour la recherche sur la moelle épinière** (Tomás Reader Fund for spinal cord research) at Université de Montréal, a fund which will be administered by the CRSN. We are most grateful to him. Donations may be addressed to: Fonds Tomás Reader, Bureau de développement, Faculté de médecine, Université de Montréal, PO Box 6128, Centre-ville station, Montreal (Québec) H3C 3J7.

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