

Prof. John L. Robins (1935-2014)

It was with great sadness that members of IUVSTA heard the news of the death, on 1st October 2014 of John L. Robins. John was the President of IUVSTA during the 1995-1998 triennium.

John L. Robins was born in Perth, Australia in 1935. He obtained a PhD in Physics (1962) from the University of Western Australia. He then held research appointments with the National Research Council in Canada and Cornell University in the USA before returning to Australia as a Queen Elizabeth II Fellow in 1966. During the period 1968–1994, he was a member of the academic staff of the University of Western Australia. After retirement, he was nominated as an Honorary Professor and Senior Honorary Research Fellow. His constant and strong dedication to the University of Western Australia had been recognised through the award of the Chancellor's Medal in 1999. John's contribution to his Alma Mater's centenary celebrations in 2013 was to write and publish a 'History of the Physics Department of The University of Western Australia', covering every aspect of the Department's first hundred years. In addition to his appointment with the University of Western Australia, John Robins was also a Visiting Professor at Curtin University of Technology and an Adjunct Professor at Murdoch University, both in Western Australia. During his period of activity, he also spent periods of study leave at Cambridge University and the University of York in England, the National Bureau of Standards (now NIST) in the USA and Shizuoka University in Japan. His research interests were related to Vacuum Science, Thin Films, Surface Physics and Materials Science. He published approximately 55 scientific articles including three book chapters. He has been the Australasian Editor for the journal "Vacuum" and member of the Editorial Advisory Boards of "Vacuum" and "Progress in Surface Science".

Professor Robins was a Fellow of the Institute of Physics (London), a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Physics and a Foundation Member of the Vacuum Society of Australia.

Professor Robins served IUVSTA (The International Union for Vacuum Science, Technique and Applications) in many capacities: as Recording Secretary (1980-83), Welch Scholarship Trustee (1986-1989), IUVSTA Councillor and Alternate Councillor for Australia for various terms, Visual Aids Editor-in Chief (2001-2007), President-Elect (1992–1995), President (1995-1998) and Past-President (1998-2001). He was Editor of the 2nd edition of the "History of IUVSTA" and its companion volume "Short Histories of the National Vacuum Societies within IUVSTA" published in 2001.

His wisdom and the clear way he was conducting debates and discussions, encouraging and listening to all points of view, were much appreciated during his leadership.

John Robins was a true gentleman. He was thoughtful and indulgent, always looking at things in a positive way. He will be sorely missed.

Our sympathy goes out to his wife Joan and family.

M-G. Barthés-Labrousse