

Obituary

Professor A.C. Pipkin, 1931–1994

To the deep regret of his many friends and colleagues, Professor Allen C. (Jack) Pipkin, a member of the Editorial Board of this Journal, died suddenly at home on 30 October 1994.

Jack Pipkin was brought up in Arkansas, USA. He was proud to have served as an officer in the United States Army. His undergraduate studies were at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; from there he moved to Brown University, where he took his PhD under the guidance of Ronald Rivlin. Apart from a brief spell as an Assistant Professor at the University of Maryland, and a sabbatical year at the University of Nottingham, the remainder of his academic career was devoted to the Division of Applied Mathematics at Brown University.

Jack Pipkin was a truly original and exceptionally gifted applied mathematician, and more than a hundred papers and a book on viscoelasticity bear witness to this. He had a remarkable gift for simplifying difficult problems and for extracting the significant physical information from a complex situation which, combined with a remarkable memory and mastery of mathematical techniques, made him a leading figure in mechanics and applied mathematics. He also had a talent for presenting his work in a concise but crystal clear fashion so that his papers are models of how scientific papers should be written. He wasted few words, either in writing or in speech, but everything he wrote and said was worth reading or hearing. Generations of graduate students at Brown, many of whom became eminent in their own right, were inspired by him.

Professor Pipkin made seminal contributions to many areas of mechanics and continuum physics, beginning with his work with Rivlin on the formulation of nonlinear constitutive equations, and including extensive researches on non-Newtonian fluids and nonlinear viscoelasticity. With T. G. Rogers, he was largely instrumental in developing the theories of ideal fibre-reinforced and highly anisotropic solids. In recent years his main research interest was in the mechanics of fabrics and networks of cords, for which he successfully established proper mathematical foundations.

As recently as September 1994, Jack attended an IUTAM Symposium on Anisotropy, Inhomogeneity and Nonlinearity in Solid Mechanics at Nottingham University. It is ironic that at that meeting he gave a graceful tribute to his long-time friend and collaborator, Tryfan Rogers, who died in the previous year. His untimely death is a sad loss for mechanics and for the journal.

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