



DENIS IAN GOUGH

1922 - 2011

Ian Gough was born in 1922 in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. His parents were Ivy and Frederick Gough. He grew up to love science – enquiry, theory, and discovery. He built his own first telescope, grinding its four-inch lens, and thought of being an astronomer.

At Rhodes University he did a degree in Physics. While there, he met his great love, Wendy. They were married in 1945, after his war service, and they lived happily together for 66 years. They had two children, Catherine and Stephen. He was encouraged to undertake graduate studies, and did a DSc and PhD in geophysics.

His academic career spanned 35 years, in South Africa, Zimbabwe, the USA, and Canada. The family came to Edmonton in 1966, where Ian joined the Physics Department at the University of Alberta and founded and directed the Institute of Earth and Planetary Physics, 1975-80.

Ian rose to great eminence in his career: he published 106 refereed papers and book chapters. Some of the early papers were joint with Wendy. He was a fellow of the South African Geophysics Association (Rudolf Krahman medal, 1989); the American Geophysical Union; the Canadian Geophysical Union (past president, and J. Tuzo Wilson medal, 1983); International Association of Geomagnetism and Aeronomy, (president, 1983-87); fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society (Chapman medal 1988); fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. In 1990, Ian was honoured by Rhodes University with a DSc degree honoris causa.

A website has been set up at mtnet.dias.ie/memoriain/gough.html by one of his friends, where tributes from his scientific colleagues are being collected. The family has been receiving many tributes attesting to the importance of his scientific work and his caring nature as a colleague and supervisor of graduate students.

When he retired in 1990, Ian resumed writing poetry. He has published works in several Canadian and British literary journals, and he published a book entitled “Signing the Light” in 2006.

Ian loved music, especially Mozart and Bach. He loved literature and was widely read.

Central to Ian’s personality was his profound belief in a powerful, loving and compassionate God.

Word of you

*If I would paint you pictures of my love
What pigments would I use to fashion them?
Or if your understanding I would move
With words, how might I so impassion them?
The fairest forms of nature cannot frame
Nor art declare, her subtle loveliness
And if her charms were every day the same
Must autumn skies forego their changefulness.*

So I wrote sixty years ago, eight lines
Without a word of you in them: of hair
Browncurled: of eyes brownbright with love: of heart
Private and brave and given: or of mind
Through long life giving our young ones – and theirs –
A love clearsprung from far beyond the stars...

Ian Gough 2000

To Share

The Courtesy from far holds dear
the selves of those who must bear pain –
does not intrude unless we ask
gives space and time, waits on our prayer.

But if we ask, at our first word
strength won in Gethsemane is there
and what we could not bear becomes
a work of love we learn to share.

Ian Gough 2011 January 13-31

Tributes from Ian's Grandchildren –

Andrea writes: Grandfa was gifted in appreciating and celebrating the joy and beauty of his existence. Every experience was first an opportunity to learn, then an occasion to give thanks and praise. This was most precious and meaningful in his relationships with those for whom he cared deeply. You knew that Grandfa valued and loved you always. He cherished every moment he had with each of us. I will never forget the love and joy he radiated when he held each of his great-grandchildren.

David writes: My grandfather was a role model and mentor. Everything he did, he did well, and was always eager to teach. The many hours I spent with him contain some of my happiest memories: in the wood shop, the garden, building inventions and doing science experiments. Those times were the conception of most of the things I am passionate about now. I will always love him, both for the lovely man he was and for the inspiration he still brings.

Christina writes: Grandfa had a strong influence on my life – as much as any parent. He was always there, in both happy and difficult times, to give strength and love. He loved poetry, music, reading, art and science. Above all, he loved his family very dearly, especially Granny. Their lifelong partnership is the model to me of what marriage can and should be. Seeing him with my son, I can imagine what he was like with his children and grandchildren, when we were babies, so loving and full of joy. He was always so proud of our achievements, never hesitating to congratulate us. I am blessed to have had him in my life, and honoured to be his granddaughter.

Lauren writes: Grandfa was a kind, calm and very intelligent man who liked to share words of wisdom. He was always full of joy. When I think of him, I remember happy summers spent as his and Granny's house, playing croquet in the garden, and eating delicious barbecues. These memories I will treasure forever.

Bethan writes: Though distance limited the time I could spend with my Grandfa, the vastness of the Atlantic Ocean was no obstacle in our relationship. He was such a wise, kind, and gentle man who always took a keen interest in us. He always complimented us on what we did, praising our 'great minds' which, without doubt, we inherited from him! I will always cherish the summer visits we had with the Canadian branch of the family, and the memories of Grandfa that come from them. As an adult, I am honoured to have been able to call him 'Grandfa'. He will be forever missed.

Hannah writes: Though our time together was far too short, I can speak for all when I say that Grandfa was one of the most gentle and selfless souls that anyone could meet. He always showed great concern for everyone around him and put their needs before his own. I have many fond memories of our visits, and our chess games, including a few that doubtless he let me win!

Other words will be offered by Ian's family over refreshments after the service, to which you are all invited. Please do stay if you can.

Donations 'in memoriam' may be made via the family to the Nelson Mandela Children's Charity.