

Rica, for nine years before finally retiring to Trinidad.

Hardy's research career began after his return to the West Indies in 1920. He began by being interested in problems of soil water and the effect of water on some soil properties; then in the 1930s he became interested in the characteristics and genesis of tropical soils and laterites; and finally in the 1940s and 1950s he developed his well known studies on the soil factors that affect the fertility of tropical soils and their suitability for specific crops. In addition he was one of the early British soil scientists who realised the need for appropriate soil surveys for agricultural development, and I believe the first in the colonial Empire to institute a systematic soil survey, and he succeeded obtaining funds over a period of years for a survey of most of the British West Indies.

Professor Hardy had, however, a far greater influence on British colonial agriculture than would be judged from his research work, for almost every recruit to the Colonial Agricultural Service since the mid-1920s spent a year in Trinidad and most would study soils under him. His enthusiasm, his great friendliness and approachability, and his gift for picking out the most important points in any discussion, all left their mark; and his appreciation of the relation of the soil and the crop to the natural landscape must have influenced the ecological approach to agricultural development shown by many outstanding colonial agricultural officers.

*E. W. Russell*

## William Parker

THE sudden and untimely death of William Parker, Professor of Chemistry at the University of Stirling, at his home in Dunblane on May 9 at the age of 45, has left the world-wide chemistry community with an immense feeling of loss.

Born in Glasgow in 1932, Willie Parker was a distinguished pupil of Whitehill Secondary School after which he went to the University of Glasgow where he took a first class honours degree in Chemistry in 1953. He started his PhD studies in Glasgow with Professor R. A. Raphael and completed them at the Queen's University of Belfast when Raphael moved there to his first professorial post. In 1956 Willie joined Professor G. Stork's group at Columbia University and then returned to the University of Glasgow where he rapidly moved up the academic ladder, culminating in his appointment to a senior lectureship in 1966. Promotion to readership saw him back in Ireland in 1968 at the

New University of Ulster where he spent two happy years helping to build up the new chemistry department there with characteristic drive and enthusiasm under the leadership of Professor M. Grundon. Armed with this valuable experience he returned to Scotland in 1970 to take up the first chair in organic chemistry at the University of Stirling.

Natural products, particularly the sesquiterpenes, were Willie's first love and in this area he published many important papers relating to their synthesis, biogenesis and rearrangements. In particular, he and his co-workers unravelled many of the problems associated with the molecular acrobatics of caryophyllene and humulene and their derivatives. Although he maintained this interest throughout his research career, a sabbatical year with Professor J. Berson at the University of Wisconsin in 1965 served to promote and nurture his growing interest in organic reaction mechanisms with particular emphasis on the solvolytic behaviour and preferred conformation of a wide range of bridged bicyclic compounds. Of particular note were his contributions to the understanding of the reactivity of bicyclo[3,3,1]nonane, bicyclo[3,3,2]decane and bicyclo[3,3,3]undecane (manxane) derivatives. At the other end of the spectrum he also had a keen research interest in the chemical factors influencing germination and dormancy in wild oat seeds. Shortly before his death, his group, together with collaborators in other disciplines, had made significant advances in this area.

Over the past eighteen years I knew him in many different rôles; as a teacher, as a research supervisor, as a colleague, as an opponent on the squash court and, above all, as a friend. In all these aspects his boundless enthusiasm, inexhaustible drive, unadulterated Glasgow humour, and extrovert personality made a tremendous impact on me as they did on so many other people. If ever there was a teacher who practised the subtle art of instilling a sense of dedication and professionalism in his students there was no greater practitioner than Willie Parker. Under his guidance and tuition organic chemistry came across as an exciting and challenging field of study.

Over the years many students, of whom I was one, continued their studies with Willie as their PhD supervisor. He shared in our triumphs and disappointments at the bench, our laughter and our tears. All of us greatly benefited from that experience and I have no doubt that his guiding principles and aspirations had a profound influence on us.

His rumbustious character came

through vividly in all the many facets of his work at the University. Willie was by no means an isolationist in an ivory tower; he enjoyed all his teaching commitments whether in the first year undergraduate laboratory with his sleeves rolled up or at the Monday evening postgraduate seminars. He approached his administrative duties both in the chemistry department and in the many university committees on which he served with a refreshing, down-to-earth attitude.

More than anything else he wanted to and did put the Chemistry Department of Stirling University on the map. I believe that he achieved this not only by his own personal reputation in the world of organic chemistry and by his service on national committees such as the Chemistry Panel of the Science Research Council, but also by his active encouragement of other members of staff to apply for grants and to seek and establish links with the chemical industry. Above all he had the unique ability to muster and channel our individual energies towards the common cause of creating a resourceful and stimulating department. His door was always open to those seeking advice and counsel. It is not surprising that he achieved so much during his relatively short trip to India last year while acting as project co-ordinator for a UNDP/UNESCO programme 'Special Assistance to Selected Science Departments in Indian Universities.' The United Nations could not have picked a better man for such a stamina-sapping mission.

Willie's tough professionalism really knew no boundaries; it overflowed onto many other areas including the sports field. His light blue tracksuit is a legend at Stirling University. Even beyond the campus his zest and vigour were manifest. At various times he was chairman of the local gardening club, a member of the male voice choir, and a coach to one of the Cub football teams. Just as Willie knew how to advise and encourage young academics, so too did he help the nine-year-old footballer. From his own student days as a keen footballer he remembered the importance of a new strip and the morale-boosting sing-song in the car returning from a 26-nil defeat.

All his many friends, both in the UK and abroad, have shared in one unique privilege—that of knowing the truly remarkable character of Willie Parker. For all of us, we are the beneficiaries of that enriching and rewarding experience, the memory of which will live on to compensate in part for our tragic loss which we share with his wife and three children.

*James S. Roberts*