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OBITUARY - PROFESSOR PETER LYNN PRATT

Peter Lynn Pratt was one of a small group of British scientists who brought about the evolution of materials science as an academic discipline.

He was born March 10, 1927, beginning his career at Birmingham University, where he graduated with a First Class degree in metallurgy. As a post-graduate he had the good fortune to work in the Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge, under the direction of Sir Lawrence Bragg and Professor Egon Orowan, two towering figures in the study of the structure, microstructure and properties of materials. His research culminated in a Ph.D. on plasticity in sodium chloride.

Pratt served as a Research Fellow, Atomic Energy Research Establishment, Harwell 1951-53; Lecturer, Birmingham University 1953-58; Reader in Physical Metallurgy, Imperial College 1959-63; Professor of Crystal Physics, Imperial College, London 1963-92 (Emeritus '92); Dean, Royal School of Mines 1977-80, Member, Governing Body 1977-80, Director of Continuing Education 1981-86. He was married in 1951 to Lydia Hatton (two sons) and died Beaconsfield, March 2, 1995.

Pratt never followed the fashionable research topics of the day but always chose to work where he saw the need for scientific understanding of materials. It was at a stage in his career when many would have been content with past achievement that he launched himself into the complex world of cement and concrete chemistry, the setting reactions and consequent microstructural development which determines the mechanical behavior of this essential constructional material. The cement research group grew rapidly, and resulted in frequent invitations to Peter Pratt to speak at international meetings.

He brought to all his research great enthusiasm and intellectual rigor, which inspired the many research students he supervised. Pratt's research experience taught him the essential unity of the science of all engineering materials and the need for this to be expressed in teaching. Many of his former students have achieved prominence in academia and industry.

Among Peter Pratt's numerous honors and awards are the Beilby Medal (in 1964) and the Griffiths Medal (1990) of the Institute of Materials. He was a member of the Editorial Board of Cement and Concrete Research. His penetrating mind, enthusiasm for his numerous undertakings both professional and avocational, generosity in sharing his knowledge, and his dry wit will be much missed by all those who knew him.