

Roy Jeffreys, OBE (1926-2008)

As a director of Kodak Ltd and Honorary Treasurer of the RSC Council, Roy Jeffreys was an inspirational leader with a great enthusiasm for life and the chemical sciences.

Born in Hampstead, Roy went to school in Neasden. His father was a violin repairer for Hill's, an establishment that appeared in Pepys' diaries of 1660s London.

In 1945 Roy graduated with a concentrated two-year wartime BSc in chemistry from King's College London. He spent two years engaged in defence-related research before joining Kodak's organic chemistry group under Ed Knott. He continued to study as a part-time external student at King's, specialising in optical isomerism and photographic dye chemistry, and was awarded a PhD in 1954. During this busy period he also found the time to marry Joyce, in 1951.

Over the following 20 years, Roy gradually took on more responsibilities in the lab and developed long lasting links with Eastman Kodak's other research labs in Rochester, Kingsport and Paris. He attended many conferences, and through his friendly disposition and ability to explain things simply, was a very popular contributor.

After a short spell in Kodak's marketing division, Roy was appointed Director of Research in 1976, succeeding his mentor Ed Knott. When describing this role he would say: 'I'm not a director of research - I'm a manager of people who do research.' He was a consummate diplomat - a pet phrase when at an impasse at meetings was 'Look at it this way.'

In addition to his everyday duties, Roy took on numerous other responsibilities, at Kodak and in the wider community. To all of these roles he brought his unerring enthusiasm and inspirational ability to make work fun. He represented Kodak in an ongoing law suit with Polaroid; served as Chairman of the trustees of the Eastman Dental Research Foundation; ran several marathons, raising significant sums for charity; and was involved heavily with the Royal Photographic Society (RPS), the R&D Society, and the RSC. In 1987 he was awarded the Silver Progress Medal, the highest honour bestowed by the RPS, for his contributions to photochemistry and his leadership at Kodak. His services to chemistry were also recognised with an OBE in 1995.

Roy joined the Royal Institute of Chemistry (RIC) after his graduation in 1945, and was a committed contributor to the London section, rising to the post of Chairman in the 1960s. His enthusiasm and command of the organisation meant that there were waiting lists to attend most meetings, such was their quality. As Chairman, he later oversaw the transition within the London sections when the RIC amalgamated with three other learned and professional bodies to become the Royal Society of Chemistry, stepping into the fray whenever needed and working hard behind the scenes. He became Honorary Treasurer to the RSC Council in 1990, and made immeasurable contributions to the running of the society and the Chilterns and Middlesex local section.

Both Roy and Joyce were keen gardeners and had great affection for the natural world. He particularly loved frogs and spiders, and kept a large pet spider at home for many years.

His vitality, sense of humour and boundless enthusiasm will be greatly missed by his family, friends and colleagues.

Anne Gloag, Mike Maunder and Peter Block. Additional reporting by Phillip Broadwith



Roy Jeffreys: an inspirational leader who made work fun