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In memoriam: Donald Hooper

Posted by **Department of Chemistry** on September 29, 2023 in [In Memoriam](#)

Dr. Donald L. Hooper, a longtime faculty member in the Department of Chemistry, died on September 20, 2023. Don was a proud New Brunswicker, born in St Stephen, NB on November 18, 1938. He received his university education at the University of New Brunswick, culminating with a PhD in Physics, his thesis being based on NMR spectroscopy. He spent a year on a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of East Anglia, using one of the first NMR spectrometers in the UK.

In 1966, Don was appointed to an Assistant Professorship in the Department of Chemistry at Dalhousie University, initially to teach a section of first-year chemistry. However, of particular importance, the Department had just purchased a used Varian A-60D NMR spectrometer which he shepherded with great care and patience. Typical of early instruments with vacuum-tube electronics this produced an excellent spectrum only after some hours of carefully manipulating some dozen potentiometers, each of which was interdependent on the other. There was a fine art to doing this and if perchance there was a glitch during that time, the process had to be restarted. Don was the go-to expert when other users failed, as by this time NMR had become a necessary part of being an organic chemist.

Don remained as a faculty member for the next 37 years, moving through spectrometers of increasing power and cost, becoming a key member of the Atlantic Region Magnetic Resonance Centre (now Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Research Resource, NMR-3), where he was manager for many years.

Don was an accomplished, versatile teacher not only for first year

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chemistry classes but also for second year organic and physical chemistry and for many years the fourth year and graduate level organic structure determination classes. He supervised only a few of his own graduate students, but he was involved in numerous collaborations with other chemists and was always a valued member of many graduate student committees. He was an unassuming man and friend, but one who could be relied on to offer words of wisdom and sound advice.

Don is survived by his wife Shirley (Smillie), his daughter Lorraine, son-in-law Roderick and granddaughter Beau.

Link to funeral home:

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/en-ca/obituaries/halifax-news/donald-hooper-11472189>

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