

Obituary



Benjamin J. Garnier, Emeritus Professor of Geography, passed away in northern Italy at the beginning of June, 2010 at the age of 93.

He was born of missionary parents in Tsinan, northern China in 1917 and educated (B.A. and M.A. degrees) at St. Catherine's College, Cambridge University. He was in charge of geography at Wellington Technical College, New Zealand and then moved to Dunedin in the South Island in 1945 to set up the Department of Geography at the University of Otago. He moved to the University of Ibadan, Nigeria from 1951 to 1961 and then joined Indiana University in Bloomington, USA. He came to McGill in 1965, replacing Ken Hare. He noted that he came to McGill attracted 'by the unique opportunities for field studies. McGill maintains weather stations and field studies in climatology on Axel Heiberg Island, at Knob Lake (Schefferville), in Montreal, on Barbados and in British Guiana.

He specialized in climatology, 'which stresses man's interrelationship with climate' and worked in New Zealand, Africa, the Caribbean and Canada. His research papers contributed to the understanding of the climate of New Zealand, evapotranspiration and water balance in western Africa, and the radiation balance of surfaces in the Caribbean and the Arctic. He wrote or edited five books on both climatology and geographical education. He was Chair of Geography at McGill from 1974 to 1980 and, according to an ex-Chair, acted with 'tact, skill and good humour'. He was appointed Emeritus Professor upon his retirement in 1982 and moved to northern Italy, his 'ancestral home'.

We offer our condolences to his wife Vanna Garnier, who resides in Turin.