Professor John Mallard, 1927 – 2021

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On 25 February the global medical physics community lost one of the most prominent medical physicists – Prof. John Mallard, OBE, FRS, Inaugural President of IUPESM.

John Rowland Mallard was born in Northampton, UK. He attended Nottingham University (at that time a College of the University of London) and in 1952 defended his PhD related to magnetic properties of uranium. He started his career at the University College Nottingham and after this moved to the Liverpool Radium Institute, working there in the field of radiotherapy. After this he moved to Hammersmith Hospital London, where in 1959 he developed the first whole-body isotope scanner in the UK. In a publication in 1964 he suggested that MRI could be used for diagnosing cancer. In 1965 he was appointed as the first Professor of Medical Physics at Aberdeen University, UK where he worked until his retirement in 1992.

He guided one of the first research in the field of Positron Emission Tomography (PET) and later continued with research in another pioneering field at the

time—Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI). Around 1970 he built a team of specialists in the Aberdeen University, which included his closest collaborator Dr Jim Hutchinson. This team developed the first in the world full-body MRI scanner (0.04 T). On 26 April 1980 they scanned the first patient with the new MRI scanner. They soon developed their Mark II MRI scanner with 0.08 T magnet.

In parallel with his research and professional work in the UK (he was IPEM President), Prof. John Mallard worked very hard for the global development of medical physics. He was in the Work Group of medical physicists from UK, USA, Canada and Sweden, who laid the foundations of the International Organisation for Medical Physics (IOMP). In 1963 he became the first Secretary General of IOMP. He took part in many international activities, including the organisation of the first International Conference on Medical Physics (ICMP) in 1963, Harrogate, UK. Later he was elected President of the IOMP and hold this office from 1979 to 1982.

Prof. John Mallard was also active in the field of international recognition of the scientific fields of medical physics and biomedical engineering. He was member of the Working Group of scientists from IOMP and the IFMBE, which founded the International Union for Physical and Engineering Sciences in Medicine (IUPESM). In 1980 he became the Inaugural President of IUPESM and made the first steps toward membership of IUPESM to the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU – now ISC, The International Science Council). This extremely important recognition passed through two phases – Associate membership and Full membership achieved in 1999.

The pioneering work of Prof. John Mallard was recognised at many levels. In 1992 he was awarded the OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. In 1993 he was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering. In 1998 The John Mallard Scottish PET Centre was opened in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. In 2004 he was given the Freedom

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of the City of Aberdeen Honour. He also received the Landau Memorial Plaque of the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM); the Academic Enterprise Competition Prize of the British Technology Group; the Royal Society Wellcome Prize and Gold Medal; the George Van Hevesey Memorial Lecture Medal; The Royal Society Mullard Award and the Royal Medal of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. In 2005 IPEM introduced the annual John Mallard Lecture, while in 2013 Prof Mallard was included in the IOMP List of

50 Outstanding Medical Physics. In 2016 IOMP established the International John Mallard Award which honours a medical physicist who has developed an innovation of high scientific quality and who has applied this innovation in clinical practice. In 2020 Prof. Jon Mallard received the first IUPESM Inaugural Fellowship.

Prof. John Mallard will always be remembered as one of top scientists who was involved in building the foundations of medical physics, both in the fields of medical technology and international development.