

MEMORIAL TO JOHN S. STEVENSON (1908-1987)

John Sinclair Stevenson, Professor of Mineralogy, Department of Geological Sciences, McGill University, died after a brief illness in Montreal on September 6, 1987. Throughout his many years at McGill, John was a favored teacher, an active researcher and a source of encouragement to students and colleagues. He was chairman of the department in the mid-sixties, and was named Sir William Dawson Professor of Geology in 1971. John was a founding member of the Mineralogical Association of Canada and acted as its president for three terms.

John was born in New Westminster, British Columbia. He grew up in the then agricultural community, a time of life he often recalled with nostalgia and pride mixed in with expert farming advice. He studied geology and geological engineering at the University of British Columbia, obtaining his B.A. in 1929 and B.A.Sc. in 1930. His graduate research was carried out at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he was one of the last students of Waldemar Lindgren before retirement. The Eustis mine in the Eastern Townships of Quebec was the subject of the research, for which he received a doctorate in 1934.

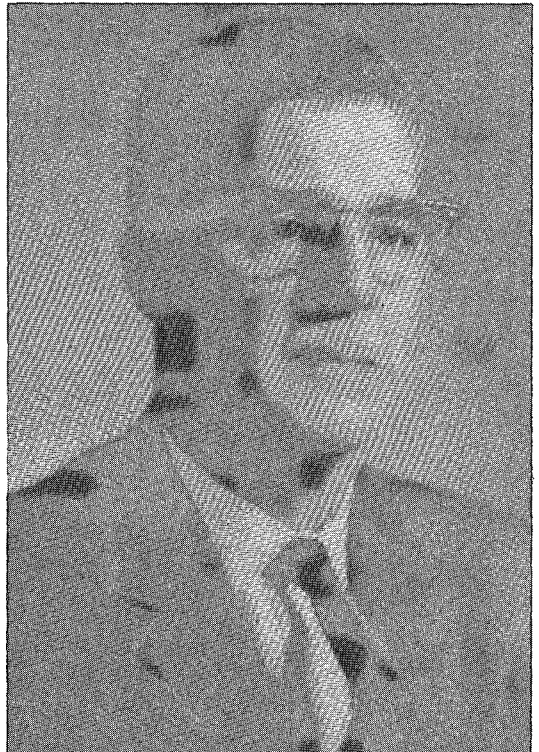
While at MIT, John met Louise Francis Stevens, who was studying geology and mineralogy at nearby Radcliffe. After graduation they married, had two sons, John and Robert, and throughout their careers collaborated on topics of mineralogical research and coauthored a number of scientific papers.

In 1935 John joined the British Columbia Department of Mines and for fifteen years studied mineral deposits in the Coast Range of the Cordillera. The many papers and monographs he published on these deposits record the expertise and thoroughness of his work. Toward the end of this period of his career, he received a Guggenheim Fellowship to study strategic metal deposits as a visiting scientist at a number of universities in the United States.

The university environment of teaching and research enticed John to come to McGill in 1950 as an Associate Professor. He took over the teaching of mineralogy from R.P.D. Graham, who had just retired, and taught mineralogy to undergraduate and graduate students until his retirement. As a former student, I can attest to the high quality of John's lecturing and teaching skills. His courses were always interesting: who of his students will not recall his enraptured explanation of the function of a biaxial indicatrix? John's educational interests went beyond mineralogy to the training of professional geologists in the M.Sc. (Applied) program in Mineral Exploration. His contribution to this program was recog-

nized by his former students, who established the Stevenson Medal in his honor, to be awarded each year to the outstanding graduating student in the program.

The Sudbury Irruptive and its nickel-copper ores was a major topic of John's research. He consulted for International Nickel for many years, leading field parties in the mapping of the irruptive and defining new exploration criteria in the search for ore. He was a leading proponent of a 'geologic' and 'volcanic' origin of the Sudbury Basin and Irruptive at a time when a 'meteorite impact' origin was being widely acclaimed. His research on the micropegmatite and on the Onaping Formation, which he regarded as a tuff (*versus* an impact 'fallback' breccia), were the subject of some of his finest papers. Sudbury was not John's first confrontation with meteorites. While at the B.C. Department of Mines, he became a member of the local branch of the Royal Astronomical Society, and helped search for meteorites reported to have fallen in the B.C. interior. John's



JOHN S. STEVENSON

other research interests covered a large spectrum of mineralogical subjects. Of particular interest to John and Louise were the occurrences of dawsonite, mcgillite and native arsenic in the Monteregian intrusive complexes around Montreal; they contributed jointly to research on the mineralogy of fossils, medical mineralogy and the mineralogy of manganese nodules.

John and Louise travelled widely to areas of geological interest. They were constant attendees at meetings of geological and mineralogical societies and participated in many, many field trips. Seeing it in the field or in a mine was, to John, a most important aspect of geology. Their latest conference attendance was the International Workshop on Cryptoexplosions and Catastrophes in the Geological Record, held in South Africa in the summer of 1987. John presented a paper and got his first, and last, look at the Bushveld Complex and the Merensky Reef on the accompanying field trip.

In addition to the Mineralogical Association of Canada, John was a fellow or member of the Royal Society of Canada, the Geological Association of Canada, the Geological Society of America, the Mineralogical Society of America, The Mineralogical Society (London), the Society of Economic Geologists and the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy. He was an active member of Sigma Xi and served as president of the local chapter in 1966-67. He was an Honorary Member of the Gem and Mineral Society of Montreal, and gave his last lecture to them in August, just a few days prior to his final illness.

In addition to his teaching and scientific contributions, John will be remembered for his gentlemanly ways. He was always gentle and understanding with his students and colleagues, even when at times they trespassed on his kindly nature.

Wallace H. MacLean