A Tribute to Dr. Eric Laurence Hoffman

It is with great sadness that we announce that Dr. Eric Laurence Hoffman, President and founder of Activation Laboratories Ltd. (Actlabs), passed away on 10 July 2015.

Eric was born in Montréal, Québec to parents Jenny and Kelly, and had 3 siblings, Barbara, Gordon, and Stanley. He received a BSc with First Class Honours with Great Distinction in Geology from McGill University in 1974, a MSc in Geology from McGill University in 1975, a PhD in Geology from the University of Toronto in 1978, and became a registered Professional Geoscientist (PGeo) in Ontario in 2002.

Eric was an economic geologist with over 30 years of experience in minerals exploration, analysis, and management. In 1978 at the young age of 35 he established Nuclear Activation Services Ltd., a partnership with McMaster University and the first commercial instrumental neutron activation laboratory in the world. In 1987, Eric established Activation Laboratories Ltd. (Actlabs) Group of Companies with a focus on commercializing innovative technologies with the highest quality standards to the minerals, metallurgy, petroleum, life sciences, environmental, forensics, materials testing, and agriculture industries, achieving global success by building and running a company with 27 laboratories and 1000 employees in 12 countries. In 2014, Actlabs new 200,000 sq ft global headquarters was officially opened, a milestone for Actlabs growth and a symbol of how much he accomplished.

Eric received many honours and awards, including a 1971-72 JW McConnell Undergraduate Scholarship, a 1972-73, RPD Graham Undergraduate Scholarship; a 1973-74 Logan Undergraduate Scholarship; the 1974 Logan Gold Medal in Geology; 1974-75, 1975-76, 1976-77, and 1977-78 National Research Council of Canada Postgraduate Scholarships; 1978-79 and 1979-80 NRC Post-Doctoral Industrial Fellowships; a 2009 Canadian Innovation Leader award from Government of Canada, and the 2013 Gold Medal from the Association of Applied Geochemists. The AAG Gold Medal was awarded in recognition of Eric’s career as an industry leader in bringing novel analytical techniques to commercial fruition. He anticipated the evolving needs of the applied geochemist through technique design and instrument modification for a wide variety of sample media – key to longer term success as exploration has moved into progressively more difficult concealed terranes. He was a Fellow of the Geological Association of Canada and a Member of the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada, the Northwest Mining Association, the Society of Economic Geologists, Canadian Mineral Analysts, the Association of Applied Geochemists, and the Professional Geologists of Ontario, and was member a CCRMP Advisory Group to CANMET.

Eric was greatly admired and deeply respected by all who knew him. He was an excellent businessman, a great innovator, a valuable contributor to the geochemistry community, a champion of geochemical research, and an icon of the Canadian mineral exploration scene. Eric published consistently throughout his career, was always in attendance at scientific meetings to present and promote the latest in techniques and instrumentation in geochemical exploration. In addition to his close work with industry, hundreds of research papers in the peer-reviewed literature bear the mark of Actlabs’ contributions and Eric’s direct input. He was a strong supporter and sponsor of collaborative industry-university research projects in Canada and abroad. He will be missed by all who interacted with him for his drive and energy.

Eric leaves behind his wife of 38 years, Felyce, and his 3 children, Michael, Robbi, and Ariella. All four work at Actlabs and along with the rest of the Actlabs team continue to keep the company strong and thriving.

A scholarship fund has been established in Eric’s name in the Geology Department at the University of Toronto. Please contact Ariella Hoffman <ariellahoffman@actlabs.com> for more information.

Michael Lesher, Laurentian University
Matthew Leybourne, Laurentian University
Mark Hannington, Ottawa University