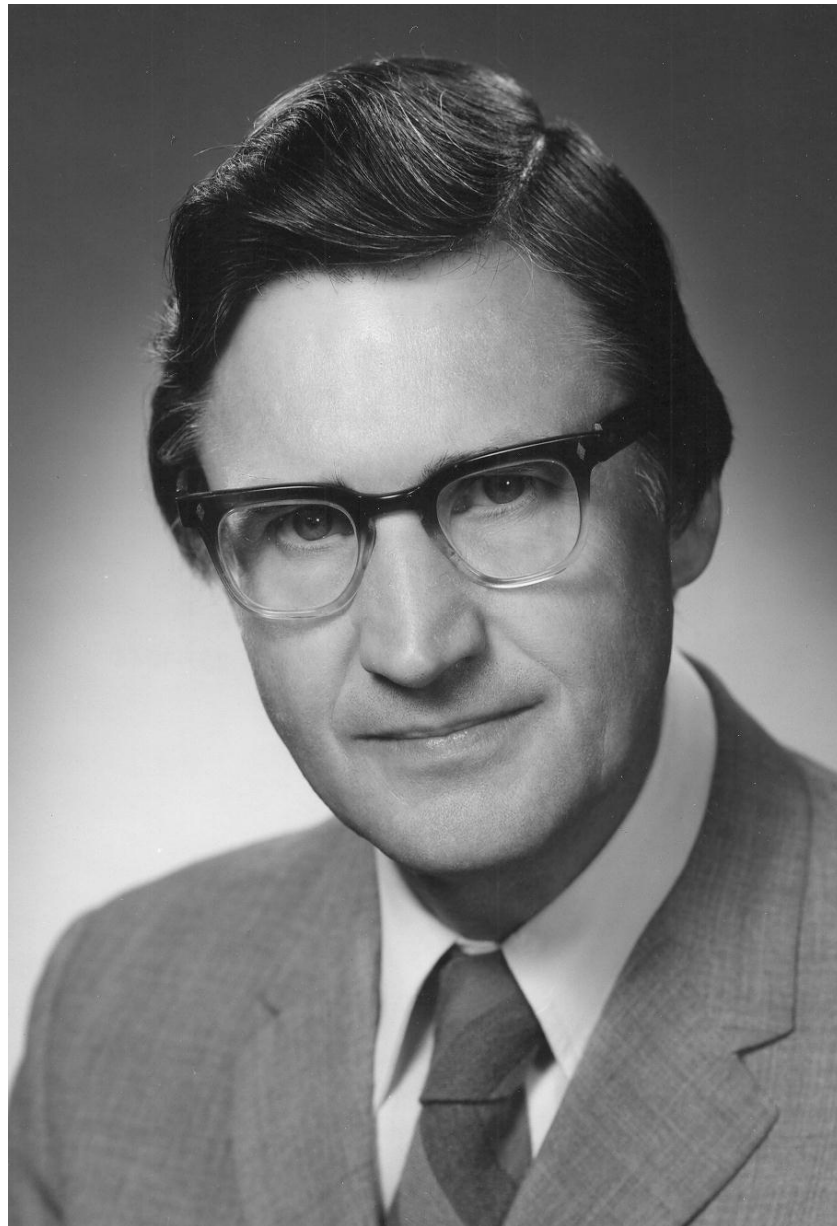


MICHAEL STINSON & GILLES DAIGLE

Edgar Albert George Shaw
1921-2009



Edgar Albert George Shaw, beloved husband of the late Millicent (Chandler) Shaw, died peacefully in hospital on October 18, 2009 with his family by his side. Edgar was highly-regarded internationally for his careful and definitive research in many areas of acoustics.

Edgar Shaw was born July 10, 1921 in Teddington, Middlesex, England. He began his formal education as a scholarship student at Harrow School and finished it by completing a doctorate at Imperial College, London. During World War II, Edgar served with the British Ministry of Aircraft Production. His work on the development of radar in London, Washington DC and New York City, was vital to the war effort.

Edgar had a long and successful career in acoustics at the National Research Council (NRC) in Ottawa, Canada. He began in 1951 after emigrating from the United Kingdom. He studied hearing protectors and earphones, the measurement of hearing (audiometry), the vibrational behaviour of the violin, occupational noise exposure, the effect of noise on birds, noise exposure in the community, and more. A prevailing theme through all his work was his concern for the human condition. Edgar was a humanitarian and he wanted his work to benefit his fellow humans.

His work was often ahead of his time. For example, his research on the directional listening properties of the ear was always recognized as being of the highest quality but only in recent years has this work been exploited. Now, every product on the market that creates realistic, three-dimensional sound and every paper on the subject of head-related transfer functions can be traced back to Edgar's pioneering studies. The probe microphone that he developed to measure sound around the ear was innovative and the prototype for all probe microphones in use today.

From 1975 to 1986 he was Head of the Acoustics Section in what was then the Division of Physics of NRC. He collaborated and published with other members of the lab but his influence was felt beyond these formal interactions. He was available to everyone at all times, to provide practical and knowledgeable advice and guidance. After his retirement in 1986, Edgar continued to come in to the lab, as a Researcher Emeritus.

Edgar Shaw served as President of the Acoustical Society of America 1973 – 1974. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1975. From 1975 – 1978, Edgar was President of the International Commission for Acoustics. In 1979, the Institute of Physics (UK) awarded Edgar their annual prize for outstanding contributions to acoustics, the Rayleigh medal. The Canadian Acoustical Association established the annual Edgar and Millicent Shaw Postgraduate Prize in Acoustics in his honour.

Edgar was deeply interested in a variety of subjects including; mycology, carpentry, and the interplay of science and religion. His interest in the visual arts ran from Inuit art to Diane Arbus to Rembrandt. He was a long time supporter of the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra and the National Arts Centre Orchestra. Edgar Shaw was a long time member and elder of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Ottawa. Serving as the Chairman of the music committee, he was instrumental in selecting the church's organ. He used his expertise to design the acoustics of the sanctuary. He was a tenor in the choir for many years.

Edgar was an insightful, generous, wise and kind man. He was respectful of all, regardless of their station in life. For his family, he was available, supportive and a source of inspiration. Dr. Edgar Shaw is survived by his brother Dennis (Joan), daughter Jennifer, son Kenneth (Kate) and grandsons James, David and Michael.

*Written by
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(Author's title given as of the time of writing)