

DONALD A. RAMSAY, FRSC & NICHOLAS DARWENT

**Basil de Baskerville Darwent
1913-1996**



Basil Darwent was born on May 20, 1913 in Trinidad. His father was a surgeon. Basil attended the Lodge school in Barbados, after which he studied sugar technology at the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad. He worked on sugar plantations in Martinique before returning to Trinidad. He married Jocelyn Taitt on 20 April, 1938. Later he attended McGill University where he obtained his B.Sc. in 1941 and his PhD in 1943. He spent a further year as a Research Associate with his research supervisor Carl Winkler FRSC before being appointed as a Research Officer at the National Research Council 1944-1952.

In Ottawa he produced many papers on mercury photosensitized reactions and achieved a reputation for his achievements in cricket, undoubtedly a result of his early training in the West Indies. He was a formidable batsman, a useful medium-paced bowler and was chosen to represent Ontario. He took a sabbatical in Oxford where he worked with R.P. Bell FRS and also continued his cricketing activities. He played for Physical Chemistry against Organic Chemistry. The latter batted first and were dismissed for 75 runs. Basil Darwent opened the innings for Physical Chemistry with Andy Cole from Australia and together they scored 70 runs, at which time they decided that they should get themselves out so as to give the other team members a chance to bat. The final result was that Physical Chemistry was all out for 72 runs!

After Ottawa, Basil spent two years as Chief of the Radiation Chemistry Section at Olin Industries in Newhaven, Conn. He then joined the Chemistry Department of the Catholic University of Washington and from 1961-1967 was Head of the Department. His later research focused on the factors controlling the rates of chemical reactions and, in particular, those involving 'hot' hydrogen atoms with simple molecules such as ethylene.

After retirement, Basil and Jocelyn enjoyed life on a 150-acre farm on the lower Eastern Shore of Maryland, in Somerset County, by the Chesapeake Bay. Basil died on 14 January 1996, a few months after his wife Jocelyn.

We thank Andy Cole for his contributions on cricketing matters.

Nicholas Darwent, son of Basil Darwent

and

*Donald Ramsay, FRSC
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(Author's title given as of the time of writing)