

Harry Emmet Gunning
1916-2002



Harry Emmet Gunning was born on December 16, 1916 in Toronto, Ontario. He was educated in Toronto. He received a BA Honours, an MA, and a PhD in physical chemistry, all from the University of Toronto. After receiving his PhD in 1942, Gunning became a post-doctoral fellow at Harvard and

then a research chemist in Dr Edgar Steacie's laboratory in Ottawa. He was also a research fellow with the National Research Council. In 1946, Gunning began teaching, first at the University of Rochester and later at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

On his return to Canada in 1957, Dr Gunning became Professor and Chair of the Department of Chemistry at the University of Alberta. He was determined to build a worldclass department and convinced the University administration and the provincial government that it was in the best interests of Alberta science and education to have a strong chemistry department. Within a decade, he had built a department that achieved international recognition as a rapidly evolving centre of excellence for chemical studies. In 1973, Gunning oversaw the addition of a new (east) wing to the Chemistry Building, built to house the rapidly expanding department.

Gunning was an active researcher in the field of chemical kinetics and photochemistry and published over 175 research papers. He was president of the Chemical Institute of Canada from 1973 to 1974 and has been an active member of numerous municipal, provincial, and federal commissions and boards, including the Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Authority.

In 1974, Dr Gunning was appointed President of the University of Alberta. He introduced many innovations in science policy and administration and promoted interaction between academia, industry, and government. In addition, Gunning played a key role in promoting research and development for the exploitation of Alberta's vast oil sand resources. He also helped develop Chembiomed Ltd and was instrumental in establishing the Edmonton Research and Development Park. In recognition of his numerous achievements, Gunning received numerous awards, including the Chemical Institute of Canada Medal (1967), the Province of Alberta Achievement Award in both 1971 and 1979, and six honorary degrees. Gunning was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1979. He was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1964.

On November 30, 2001, the Chemistry Building on the University of Alberta campus was renamed the Gunning/Lemieux Chemistry Centre in honour of two of the Department's most distinguished chemists, Harry Gunning and Raymond Urgel Lemieux.

Gunning passed away November 24, 2002.