

Obituary for Richard Alan Murphy

Richard A. Murphy, University of Virginia Emeritus Professor of Molecular Physiology and Biological Physics, passed away at home on March 9, 2013 after a prolonged illness. He was born in Twin Falls, Idaho on July 4, 1938 to Albert Marion Murphy and Susan Elizabeth McClain Murphy. An excellent student and marksman, he entered Harvard University where he continued his academic success and was captain of the Harvard Rifle Team, graduating *cum laude* in 1960. He received his Ph.D. in Physiology from Columbia University in 1964, and subsequently trained as a post-doctoral fellow at the Max-Planck Institute in Heidelberg, Germany, and the University of Michigan. He and his family moved to Charlottesville, Virginia in 1968 where he joined the University of Virginia faculty, and became a full professor of physiology in 1977. Dr. Murphy was internationally known and respected for his work on the fundamental properties of smooth muscle in blood vessels and the effects on blood pressure regulation. He served on innumerable academic and review committees for the University of Virginia over the course of his successful research career, and retired in 2004. Dr. Murphy taught many young scientists and medical students through his research, lectures, and writings, and by example through his own high academic standards and personal integrity. His dedication to careful science and respect for the work of others made him a gifted and beloved mentor and friend to many who have gone on to make their own important contributions to science.

Richard's calm and stoic nature and unassuming manner contained a deep intelligence and a broad curiosity that reached far beyond the laboratory to the natural world around him. He loved gardening the land and sailing the water, fishing, feeding wild birds, and taming his own wilderness. He was content in the privacy of a good book but also loved his family, friends, lively conversation, and a good joke. He leaves his devoted wife of 51 years, Genevieve Johnson Murphy, and his two loving daughters, Hayley Murphy Parrish and Wendy Murphy Wright, and son-in-law Stewart A. Wright, all of Charlottesville, Virginia; and his sister Carol Murphy Thompson and her husband Donald A. Thompson, of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The family wishes to especially thank Dr. Daniel Becker and Dr. Stephen Caldwell at the University of Virginia Medical Center, and the caring staff of Hospice of the Piedmont. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Hospice of the Piedmont (675 Peter Jefferson Parkway, Suite 300, Charlottesville, VA 22911), the Community Idea Stations Public Television (23 Sesame Street, Richmond, VA 23235), or the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (6 Herndon Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403).