

This is a slightly expanded version of the notice from John Reid published in NA Digest on 4 October 2016

John Mason (1941-2016)

It is with great sadness that I report the death of John Mason, Emeritus Professor at the University of Huddersfield and formerly professor at Shrivvenham. Over recent years, he has been increasingly afflicted by Parkinson's disease and was finally unable to cope with an infection.

John had a distinguished career working in approximation theory, particularly using Chebyshev polynomials, admirably collected in his book with David Handscomb, published in 2002. He published over 100 papers, 9 other books, and supervised many students. He was editor (with Charles Micchelli) of *Advances in Computational Mathematics* from its inception in 1993 until 1999 and remained on its board thereafter. He was an associate editor of the *IMA Journal of Numerical Analysis* for over 20 years (1983-2005). He was an adjudicator for the Leslie Fox competition, 1988-1991, finally chairing the committee.

John's career began at the University of Maryland (1965-1967) and the University of Toronto (1967-1972). Believing in living life to the full, a part-time activity was writing and performing in satirical revues. This was very successful and he decided in 1972 that he wanted to return to England and switch to the stage as his principal activity. For 18 months, he wrote for *Week Ending* on BBC Radio 4. He mounted a revue at the 1976 Edinburgh Festival Fringe that among others featured Douglas Adams (later of *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*) and John Lloyd (later of *Blackadder* and *Spitting Image*).

Most of John's career was at Shrivvenham where he was promoted to Professor soon after the merger with Cranfield University. He was a very skilful subject leader, identifying opportunities to expand the range of mathematical and computational activities and fostering graduate students. He organized three very successful international conferences on *Algorithms for Approximation*. He moved to the University of Huddersfield in 1994. There, too, he was very successful in building up the postgraduate programs. He was awarded a Doctor of Science degree there in 2005.

John may be remembered particularly for his brilliant after-dinner speeches. He applied all his revue-writing skills to the topic in hand. Here is a quote: "Most famous is Mike Powell, the man who brought optimism to optimization by applying it to golf. On Saturdays, he practices his BFGS, brute force golf swing, followed by his CG, competitive game, finishing with SQP, square meal and a pint."

John is survived by his wife Moya, who has devotedly looked after him as his illness progressed, and his son Chad, who has inherited his father's taste for the stage.