OBITUARY

Professor Hugh Montgomery

Hugh Alexander Montgomery, who died in Auckland on 20 October 1979, was born in Christchurch on 22nd of March 1926. His mother's family had lived in Canterbury for three generations and one of Hugh's great-grandfathers on his mother's side was the renowned New Zealand geologist and naturalist F.W. Hutton. His father was a farmer, grain and seed merchant, and a director of the Christchurch Press.

Originally Hugh's intellectual interests were not in philosophy but mathematics. In the late 1940s he earned an M.Sc. in mathematics at Canterbury University. Then for a decade he left the academic world altogether to work first as a building labourer and then as a carpenter. With the skills acquired in these occupations he was able to build his own home in Christchurch in which he and his wife Mary lived for many years raising a family of five boys.

His next endeavours were in the managing and development of a shoe factory in his home town. But despite considerable business success, something seems to have attracted him back to the world of the theoretical intellect.

In 1959 he started in again at Canterbury University, this time on a B.A. degree in economics and philosophy. For a while these two fields competed for his exclusive allegiance, but in the end he did an M.A. in philosophy with first-class honours. This was followed by six years on the staff of Canterbury's Philosophy Department, and during this time Hugh put his mathematical background to good use by publishing innovative ideas in the mathematical theory of modal logic, i.e. the theory of necessity, possibility, and contingency. Some of this work was done in collaboration with Richard Routley, one of Australasia's leading logicians, and brought Hugh a considerable measure of international recognition.

In 1969 Hugh came to Auckland's Philosophy Department as an associate professor and in the same year he was for a time Visiting Adjunct Professor at the University of Pittsburgh. This stay brought Hugh into contact with some of America's leading logicians and formed the basis for the close relationship which continues to exist between the Auckland Department and Pittsburgh's.

In 1970 Hugh became Acting Head and then in 1972 Professor and permanent head of the department. He presided over a period of notable growth in the teaching commitments and staff numbers. His international reputation attracted many visitors to the Department and enabled it to place some of its promising students in ranking graduate schools abroad.
Despite this very full commitment to university life, his contacts with the non-academic world remained intact. Only days before his death he flew to Christchurch for a meeting of the Board of the Christchurch Press on which, like his father before, he was a director.

In 1976 Hugh's rare form of cancer was diagnosed, and he became aware of its likely conclusion. It was this that occasioned his resigning the headship to take up a personal chair at the beginning of 1977. Through these last three years Hugh never relaxed his commitment to teaching and the life of the Department. He remained cheerfully active despite considerable discomfort and the need for frequent medical treatments. The Department will sorely miss his talents as a philosopher and teacher and his wise advice in department meetings. But it has the memories of the courage, dignity and good humour with which he lived out his last years, and these memories will not soon fade.

List of Publications


2. **Contingency and non-contingency bases for normal modal logics** (with R. Routley), Logique et Analyse 9(1966), 318-328.


5. **Non-contingency axioms for S4 and S5** (with R. Routley), Logique et Analyse 11(1968), 422-424.


7. **Modal reduction axioms in extensions of S1** (with R. Routley), Logique et Analyse 11(1968), 492-501.


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