farewell to a friend

Jack R. MacCabe

Jack R. MacCabe died in the morning of April 17. On this Easter day, when all the trees were in full bloom, none of us knew that we had lost a friend, up in the Rhône valley.

To many of us at CERN and to all at the Public Information Office, Jack MacCabe was more than just the Senior Information Officer. His humane approach to the problems of all kinds he had to deal with in his position, made him more a friend than a colleague.

Jack was born on May 4th, 1914 at Edmonton, Canada, where, in 1930, he entered the University of Alberta. Two years later he went to McGill University, Montreal, where, by 1937, he had taken his degrees of Bachelor of Science and Master of Science (natural sciences), while working as a demonstrator and lecturer in physiology at the University’s Faculty of Medicine.

Jack MacCabe came to Europe soon after finishing at McGill and continued medical and biological studies and research at Munich University, up to the outbreak of World War II, in 1939. When he arrived in Switzerland, Jack found a position as a lecturer at the Ecole Internationale and at the Ecole d’Interprètes of the University of Geneva, where he remained until 1944. In the meantime, in 1942, he had been taken on the staff of the well-known aviation magazine “Intervia” where, in 1951, he became executive editor of the daily “Air letter”.

Joining CERN in September 1955, Jack MacCabe worked for the Synchro-cyclotron Division until March 1956, when he transferred to the Scientific and Technical Services Division as Public Information Officer. When the Public Information Service was expanded and placed under the immediate supervision of the Director-General, on January 1st 1957, J. MacCabe became Senior Information Officer.

Jack devoted his considerable energy and intelligence to meeting the general desire of the public for further information about the Organization and to bringing CERN’s achievements to the notice of all those in the press and in the public, who might not be aware of them.

Already stricken by a serious illness in the Spring of 1959, Jack had made a wonderful recovery. However, his health had recently shown signs of failing again and he had decided to take a short rest.

We were all looking forward to seeing him come back in good health after his holiday. Unfortunately, heart failure robbed us of a friend and CERN of one of its most devoted staff members.

Jack is survived by his wife Hertha, also one of our CERN colleagues, to whom in this sad moment we extend our most heartfelt sympathy.

R.A.