

John Leroy Climenhaga

Born on Nov. 7, 1916, at Delisle, Saskatchewan, Dr. John L. Climenhaga died peacefully at home surrounded by family on May 27, 2008. Predeceased by his wife of 58 years, Grace (Garratt), he is survived by his wife Ila, daughter Joan Millar (Garth) of Victoria and son David Climenhaga (Luanne) of St. Albert, Alberta, his grandchildren Kathryn Robin Climenhaga and Lily Maeve Climenhaga of St. Albert, and many nieces and nephews. He will also be missed by Ila's children, Allan (Sue) Buffam and Melody (David) Swanson, and grandchildren Laura Buffam and Eric Buffam. John was awarded a B.A. Honours degree in Physics and Mathematics in 1945 and an M.A. in Physics in 1949 from the University of Saskatchewan. In 1949, he joined the faculty of Victoria College, which in 1963 became the University of Victoria. At Victoria College, while teaching physics, he began research in astronomy at the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory in Saanich, work that would lead to a M.A. in astronomy and, in 1960, to a PhD from the University of Michigan. As Head of the Physics Department at Victoria College and UVic, a position he held until 1969, John was an effective advocate of the college's transition to a university. He campaigned for the creation of a program in Astronomy, which became reality in 1965. In the early 1970s, he championed UVic's participation in TRIUMF, the Tri-University Meson Facility located at UBC and oversaw expansion of research efforts at UVic. In 1969, he became the university's Dean of Arts and Science, a position he held through a turbulent period until 1972. He was remembered by his colleagues for his fair-minded and consistently honest approach to resolving conflicts. In 1972 and 1973, he spent a sabbatical carrying out research and teaching in Japan, South Africa and Poland. After his retirement in 1982, John was honoured by the establishment of a scholarship in his name for a senior student in physics or astronomy. The same year, the observatory on the roof of UVic's Elliott Building was named

the Climenhaga Observatory. During retirement, John continued to teach for twelve years, and gave many popular talks on astronomy in the community. On his 70th birthday, he was honoured by the International Astrophysical Union when it assigned the name Climenhaga to an eight-kilometre asteroid (Minor Planet 3034 Climenhaga), which orbits the sun between Mars and Jupiter. In 1996, UVic granted him the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science.

John was a man of faith, loved and respected by his family and his friends. He was known for his steadfastness, and for his commitment to his family, his church and his friends and colleagues.

The family would like to express their thanks to Dr. Brian Pound, and to Angela, Addey, John, and Halil for their compassionate care and support to John and Ila at the end of John's life.

A funeral service will be held on Tuesday June 3, 2008, at 1:00 pm at Emmanuel Baptist Church, 2121 Cedar Hill Cross Road. If desired, donations may be made in John's memory to the John L. Climenhaga Scholarship, c/o the University of Victoria Development Office, P0 Box 3060, Victoria, V8W 3R4.