



## IN MEMORIAM

John M. Dawson  
Professor of Physics and Astronomy, Emeritus  
Los Angeles  
1930 – 2001

Professor John M. Dawson was born in Champaign, Illinois on September 30, 1930. He received his B.S. (1952), M.S. (1954) and Ph.D. (1957) in physics at the University of Maryland. He worked as a research physicist and professor at Princeton University from 1956 to 1973, when he joined UCLA's faculty as a professor of physics. He served as director of the UCLA Institute of Plasma and Fusion Research from 1989 to 1991, and principal scientist with the Institute from 1989 until his retirement in 2001.

John Dawson was a leading figure in the physics of high temperature plasma for more than four decades, and his scientific contributions span all of plasma physics: magnetic fusion, inertial confinement fusion, space plasma, plasma astrophysics, free electron lasers, and basic plasma physics. He is regarded as the father of plasma-based accelerators as well as the father of computer simulation of plasmas.

Professor Dawson was a true humanitarian who believed that science was still the most noble of professions. He was particularly proud of his invention of an isotope separation process that was used to save many lives from prostate cancer, from which he recovered in the mid-1970s. He was beloved by hundreds of colleagues, students and friends. He was a mentor to generations of plasma physicists, and touched countless others with his generously shared physical insight, his bounty of new ideas and his encouragement of others. His mind was active to the end and he took great pleasure in discussing physics with colleagues, in the continued success of his former students and post-docs, and in the amazing progress being made in particle simulations of plasmas.

Professor Dawson was the recipient of many awards and honors for his research, including the Maxwell Prize and the Aneesur Rahman Prize – the highest honor in the American Physical Society's plasma physics and computational physics divisions. He was a member of the National Academy of Sciences, and a recipient of the California Scientist of the Year award, a Fulbright Fellowship, and two UCLA physics teaching awards. He presented many invited lectures worldwide.

John Dawson died in his sleep on November 17, 2001. He was survived by his son Arthur and his daughter Margaret; brothers Edward and Fred; sisters Irene Leland and Ruth Philips; and his four beloved grandchildren, who were his inspiration for a children's book *Grandpa's a Scientist* that he co-wrote for preschool children.

UCLA Daily Bruin, November 2001  
Vay Liang "Bill" Go, UEPRRC chair (Reviewed Statement)