

## LOUIS J. POIRIER (1918-2014)

### A CANADIAN NEUROSCIENCE PIONEER HAS PASSED AWAY

Doctor Louis J. Poirier (O.C., B.Sc., M.D., Ph.D., LL.D. (Hon.)), Professor Emeritus at the *Université Laval*, died peacefully on May 9 2014.

After the completion of his medical training in 1947 in his hometown, Montreal, he went to the University of Michigan where he obtained a PhD degree in 1950 following a series of remarkable studies on the anatomical organization of the primate temporal lobe undertaken under the supervision of the world-renowned brain anatomist Elizabeth C. Crosby.

After having served as professor and researcher at the *Université de Montréal* from 1950 to 1965, he became Professor of Experimental Neurology at the *Université Laval* in Quebec City where he founded the Neurobiology Research Center, which he headed until his retirement in 1985. This Research Center was based at the *Hôpital de l'Enfant-Jésus* and became internationally known largely because of the **development of one of the very first simian models of Parkinson's disease**. The model was so realistic that it attracted at Quebec City neurologists, neurosurgeons and neurobiologists from the entire world. The anatomical and neurochemical study of this model allowed Dr. Poirier and his McGill University's colleague Dr. Theodor Sourkes to demonstrate the existence of a direct relationship between a lesion of the dopaminergic neurons of the substantia nigra and the loss of striatal dopamine that characterized PD. This highly cited work has had a major impact on the orientation of Parkinson's disease research.



Louis Poirier also exerted a strong leadership in regards to the administration and development of Canadian neuroscience research. His scientific contributions warranted him several distinctions, including the Order of Canada, and they allowed him to be elected as honorary member of several prestigious medical and scientific societies around the world.

Louis Poirier was also a remarkably energetic mentor for many of us. He founded a neuroscience school of thought from which emerged several young clinicians and basic researchers who helped disseminate his thoughts. His influence is at the basis of the tradition of excellence in neuroscience research that the Quebec scientific community has been fostering since more than 50 years.

André Parent, PhD, FRSC

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