

Deaths and Funerals

Karel Hujer, 85, Dies; Was Astronomer At UTC

Dr. Karel Hujer, a former Guerry professor of physics and astronomy at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and a noted scholar of the world, died Friday morning in a local hospital. He was 85.

Dr. Hujer joined the University of Chattanooga faculty in 1945, after holding teaching posts at DePaul University, Iowa Wesleyan College and Michigan State College. He was made a full professor at UC in 1965, and had been director of the university's Clarence T. Jones Observatory in Brainerd. He retired from the university in 1973.

Born Sept. 18, 1902, in Zelezny Brod, Czechoslovakia, he was the son of Filip and Francisca Balounkova Hujer and the youngest of nine children.

Dr. Hujer had studied astronomy, ancient and modern, on most continents of the world. His travels included visits to China, Tibet, Japan, Mexico, Peru, South America and most countries of Europe. He had studied for a year in India and made three journeys across Russia. Dr. Hujer, who spoke eight languages, had represented UC at many national and international scientific congresses, primarily on the subject of astronomy.

He received his doctor of science degree from the University of Prague after extended studies in France, the University of London and 3½ years of graduate work at Yerkes Observatory of the University of Chicago.

In 1935, while guest lecturer at a university operated by India's great poet and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore, he met and became a close personal friend of Mohandas K. Gandhi. Dr. Hujer spent three weeks as Gandhi's guest at the mahatma's ashram at Wardha. Gandhi wrote in Dr. Hujer's diary, "May you give light to us all through your astronomic researches."

Dr. Hujer met India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1949 when he returned to that country to attend Gandhi's Memorial World Peace Conference. At that time he brought greetings from Nehru to nuclear physicist Albert Einstein, who was then teaching at Princeton.

In retirement he spent much of his time writing and lecturing, and remembered "Having had and continuing contacts with so many fine people, both faculty and students, is a chief joy of having been a professor."

Survivors include his wife, Harriet Hunt Hujer; a niece, Kveta Sun, London; a nephew, Jirik Hujer, Czechoslovakia; and a great-nephew, Dr. Michael Sun, London.

A memorial service will be held at a time to be announced.

The family asks that flowers not be sent to the funeral home.

Arrangements are by Chattanooga Guardian Funeral Home, East.