Professor Charles William Thomas Pilcher 1939–2004

On March 9, 2004, the Faculty of Medicine, Kuwait University, Kuwait lost one of its founding members and most distinguished Professors, Professor Charles William Thomas Pilcher. He was a prominent colleague, a true leader and a dedicated and respected educator who served the Faculty and Kuwait for 27 years. He will always be remembered for his significant contributions to the establishment of Pharmacology and Neuropharmacology in the Faculty, and for his commitment to academic excellence and to maintaining high standards in teaching and research.

Charles Pilcher was born on December 18, 1939 in Southampton, England. In 1963, he received a BSc from King's College, University of London and in 1969 a PhD in Biochemistry from the Institute of Neurology at the same University. He received several awards, including two from the Royal Society: an International Fellowship Award for research at the National Institutes of Health, USA (1967) and a European Exchange Award, for study at the Max-Planck Institute for Psychiatry, Germany (1975). In November 1976, he joined the Faculty of Medicine, Kuwait University, as an Associate Professor of Pharmacology and rose to the rank of full Professor in 1982. After the Liberation of Kuwait in 1991, he was appointed as Chairman of the Department, a position that he held until 2002.

As Chairman, Professor Pilcher was instrumental in bringing the Department's activities back to pre-war levels. He served on numerous committees at all levels of the University administration and he was the prime mover in establishing the rank of Professor Emeritus at the Faculty.

Professor Pilcher's research interests were the Pharmacology of the nervous system, in particular the role of opioid peptides and receptors with regard to pain and stress, elucidation of the neural mechanisms of pain in normal and pathological conditions (especially in diabetes), and smooth muscle pharmacology. In addition to his many publications, he also contributed to several review chapters in the Kuwait Drug Index (1983–1989).

Besides his active role in academia, Professor Pilcher had a special interest in the conservation and protection of the Kuwaiti environment, particularly in monitoring

bird populations and flora. He dedicated Fridays to studying and observing birds in the Kuwait desert and he contributed greatly to setting up the Jahra Pool Natural Reserve for Migratory Birds in Kuwait. In 1983, he received the Kuwait Environment Protection Society Award in recognition of his efforts in National Conservation. Among his writings on the desert birds of Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf region, his book chapters in *'Kuwait's Natural History – An Introduction'* are considered important references in this field. Professor Pilcher con-

tinued to enjoy his Friday visits to the desert until the last weekend of his life. He was also known for his passion for the Arabic language, conversing with students and colleagues in his unique accent.

Professor Pilcher is survived by his wife Lillian and three sisters. We have lost not only an outstanding professional and an admired and dear colleague, but also a loyal friend of the Faculty and Kuwait.

*Aida Shihab-Eldeen
Christopher Ford*