John Clifford West obituary

John Clifford West born 4 June 1922 died 26 October 2016
Professor West studied at Hindley and Abram Grammar school winning a scholarship to Manchester University in 1940. In 1943 he joined the Royal Navy as an Engineering Lieutenant. RNVR. For three years he was based in Londonderry, servicing ASDIC systems occasionally involving being encased in the foremost keel in total darkness and atrocious weather. During this period he found an attractive member of the Women's Royal Naval Service, Winefride, whom he married in 1946. Three daughters completed a close family.

In the same year he was appointed lecturer in electrical engineering at Manchester University, where he joined a powerhouse of researchers under Professor Williams which contributed major research advances in digital computers and novel electrical machines.

In 1958 he took up the post of Professor of Electrical Engineering at Queens University Belfast. Major changes were introduced in the teaching programme, bringing together separate academic groups in electronics and machines for degree studies and integrating shared teaching facilities for advanced non-degree courses. A complete set of laboratories was formed in the new Ashby building.

He was appointed founder Dean of the School of Applied Sciences at the University of Sussex in 1965, serving as Pro Vice Chancellor from 1967-71. During his period at Sussex, he played a major role is establishing the Inter-University Institute of Engineering Control (IUIEC), which linked the universities of Bangor, Sussex and Warwick for research and MSc teaching in Control systems.

His final academic post was Vice Chancellor and Principal at Bradford University, where his leadership emphasised his preferred form of government.

Throughout his career, he was active on national and international committees, both academic and cultural. His contributions have been recognised by the award of CBE in 1977, Fellowship of the Royal Academy of Engineering, Honorary Fellowships of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, and the Institution of Engineering and Technology together with honorary degrees from Sussex and Bradford.

Over recent decades, he has made outstanding contributions to international philately. He gained ultimate accolades for his collections of early postal material, particularly involving Chile. One notable award was the International Philatelic Gold medal (Seoul, 1994). He was pleased to be appointed by the Royal Philatelic Society ‘Keeper of the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists’ from 1992

All who came into personal contact with ‘JC’ will remember his personal concerns and help whenever it was needed, and his unfailing cheerful personality that solved many individual problems.