

Obituary
Keith John Worsley (1951-2009)

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of one the greatest figures in the brain mapping field. Keith Worsley died at his home in Chicago after a brief, yet brave battle against cancer. Keith spent most of his professional life at McGill University in Montreal as a Professor of Mathematics and Statistics before moving to the University of Chicago in the fall of 2008. Shortly after his arrival he was diagnosed with islet cell cancer and despite the best of care he passed away on Friday, February 27th at his home with his family.

Raised in New Zealand, Keith spent much of his working life at McGill collaborating with colleagues in the McConnell Brain Imaging Centre at the Montreal Neurological Institute. He made many fundamental contributions to the field of Human Brain Mapping in the statistical analysis of functional and structural brain imaging data, beginning with his seminal 1992 paper on the applications of Random Field Theory in the analysis of PET activation experimental data. He subsequently extended these approaches to the analysis of fMRI and structural MRI data, incorporating the time domain and scale space. In recent years he was fascinated by the statistical aspects of “connectivity” in all its forms; functional, structural and DTI-based. He developed publically-available software packages for volume-based (fMRIstat) and surface-based (surfstat) data analysis that are widely used in the HBM community. Keith served in various leadership positions on OHBM Council and was actively involved in many international collaborations within the HBM community. He was held in equally high regard in his home discipline, being a Canadian Statistical Society Gold Medallist, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand. While many of us often found his publications in brain mapping journals intimidating because of their theoretical rigour and virtuosity, those papers were no match for the more general papers he published in statistical journals!

Keith was a much-loved friend and a warm and generous colleague who always had time for his students and confused neuroscientists. His passion for his craft was evident to all who worked with or studied under him. He will be sorely missed by all of us. At this moment, memorial arrangements have not been finalized. Those who wish to send condolences may contact his partner in Chicago:

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