

# Manhattan Project scientist, Moscow resident, dies at 93

Lawrence H. Johnston taught at UI from 1967 to 1988

MOSCOW - Atomic physicist Lawrence H. Johnston, one of the last survivors of the Manhattan Project that created the atomic bomb, died Sunday at his Moscow home of lung cancer.

Johnston, 93, designed the detonator for the bombs that were detonated at White Sands, N.M., and Nagasaki, Japan, and is believed to be the only eyewitness to all three of the 1945 atomic explosions that also included Hiroshima, Japan. His later assignment was to measure the impacts of the bombs.

He was a professor of physics at the University of Idaho from 1967 to 1988.

During World War II, prior to his work on the atomic bomb, he also worked with Nobel Prize-winner Luis Alvarez at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology at Boston to develop microwave radar and a ground-controlled approach radar blind landing system for airplanes, an invention that was critical to the Battle of Britain and the post-war Berlin Airlift.

After the war, he also helped Alvarez build a new type of proton linear accelerator and headed construction of larger versions at the University of Minnesota and Stanford University.

At the UI, his work focused on nuclear physics, lasers and molecular spectroscopy.

He was born Feb. 11, 1918, in Shantung Province, China, to Christian missionaries. Johnston remained a lifelong Christian and devoted much of his retirement years to, "improving relations between modern science and the Bible."

He is survived by his wife, Mildred Johnston, and their five children. Funeral arrangements are pending.