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News of Interest to
Friends of the Department of Chemistry
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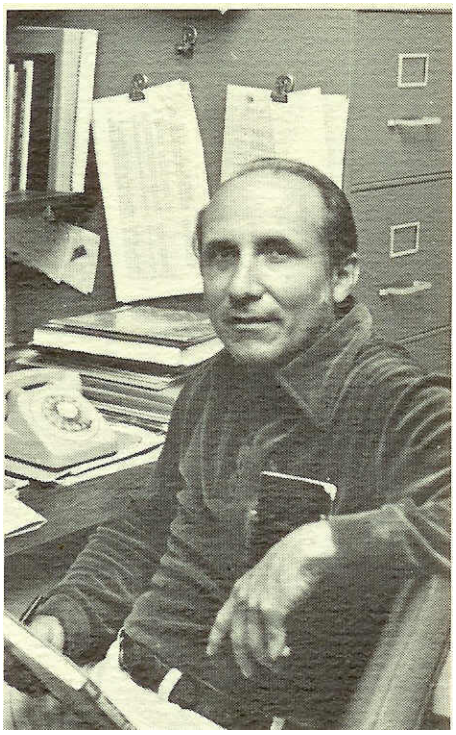
In Memoriam…



George R. Wenzinger (1933-2007)

Dr. Wenzinger, a retired Associate Professor of Chemistry, died suddenly at his home in early November. He had been a member of the Chemistry Faculty from 1963 to 1999.

He received a B.S. in chemistry (1955) from Washington University, attended Iowa State University, transferred to the University of Rochester where he worked on erythrina alkaloids with Professor Virgil Boekelheide and received his Ph.D. in 1960. Subsequently he was a Research Fellow at the University of Washington (1960-62), then a NSF Fellow at Yale 1962-63.

He joined the Chemistry Faculty at USF (1963), then completely housed in the Chemistry Building (together with the Department of Geology and the College of Education.

His research interests were in "conjugate eliminations and conjugate additions, as well as oligonucleotide methyl phosphonate-chiral additions."

Everyone who knew him, however, knew of his enthusiasm for teaching organic chemistry and his dedication to students at various levels, and possibly this was where his greatest impact was felt and may be his most important legacy, according the comments made at his memorial.

Students who worked closely with him included Dr. Patrick Benz, Dr. John Kurhanewicz, and Dr. Jose Ors.

Other chemistry alumni who wrote of his impact on their personal and professional lives included **Dr. Joanna Fowler** (B.A. '64) and **Dr. F. W. Fowler** (B.A. '64) --- SUNY at Stony Brook.

Dr. Robert Potter (Professor of Chemistry, Associate Dean , College of Arts and Sciences; Interim Chair 1998-1999) wrote, "He had a passion for organic chemistry, a passion for teaching students, and a passion for tennis. He was a great colleague and quite a character, who could always be

counted on to help with whatever the department needed done. USF Chemistry has lost one of its great ambassadors, and I will certainly miss my dear friend."

Dr. T. W. Graham Solomons (Charter Faculty; 1960- 90) wrote, " George was a very old friend of mine and of my family. He and I first met when both of us were at the University of Rochester in 1959. It was partly because of my being at USF that George came there in 1962."

" Over the years, George became an even closer friend to my wife Judith and me and the closest thing to an uncle my children have. Just a week before he died George came up to visit us in South Carolina because he knew that our younger son would be presenting his Ph. D. research seminar at the MUSC. A year ago, he flew to England to attend the wedding of our older son. We considered George to be a member of our family. We think he felt the same way."…….……

Dr. Mike Zaworotko (Professor and Chairman) said, "I have fond memories of my interactions with George (always involving wine and the other half of the '2 Georges', George Jurch). It is obvious that he garnered a great deal of respect from colleagues and students."

Dr. Wenzinger was remembered at a memorial gathering hosted by **Mrs. Richie Whitaker** and **Dr. Robert D. Whitaker** (faculty, 1962-92) at their home and attended by 50 friends and relatives (November 29).

A memorial scholarship for chemistry students was initiated by a generous donation from by **Dr. and Mrs. Solomons, Dr. Whitaker** announced. He also noted that other donations can be made to USF Foundation, Inc. (with a notation: "Wenzinger Memorial Scholarship") and sent to the Department of Chemistry.

At the memorial gathering of neighbors, tennis partners, USF alumni and faculty, it was noted that because of the self-effacing nature of **Dr. Wenzinger**, it might be possible to over look the impact that he had. On the other hand, given the shared stories and testimonials, he was remembered with love and respect and it was evident that his impact was major.

R.I.P.

Spotlight on Research

"Federal grant fuels hydrogen research" was the headline on page one of the December 3 *USF's Oracle* describing the research on hydrogen-storage compounds that has **Dr. Mohamed Eddaoudi** as Principal Investigator, in association with **Dr. Mike Zaworotko** and **Dr. Brian Space** [as reported in *News* 5(4)]

The article was continued to page 3 with a picture of the research group members.

In addition, the December 4 issue had a favorable editorial about the chemistry research, which may be a first-time occurrence in the past 43 years [www.usforacle.com].

Around the world

Dr. Mike Zaworotko (Professor and Chair) was an invited lecturer at several firms and universities in the Peoples Republic of China and Taiwan over a two-week period this fall.

Chemistry Post-docs…

The tradition of having post-doctoral associates goes back to the fall of 1964 when **Dr. Edward J. Oleszewski** and **Dr. K. Ramaiah** came to do research in inorganic chemistry.

One of the many criteria that the University is noting for admission to the Association of American Universities is the number of post-doctoral associates.

The Department currently has eleven. Their names are listed below together with the persons (*in italics*) who are providing support for their post-doctoral studies:

Drs G. Li and **Y. Liang** (***Dr. Jon Antilla***); **Drs. T. Abeylath** and **R. Labruere** (***Dr. Ed Turos***); **Dr. T. Bousquet** (***Dr.Mohamed Eddoudi***) ; **Dr. L. Wojtas** (***Drs. Eddaoudi*** and ***Zaworotko***); Dr. K Arora (***Dr. Mike Zaworotko***); and **Drs. H. Lu, V. Subbarayan**, and **S.F. Zhu** (***Dr. Peter Zhang***).

Spotlight on Faculty

Dr. Xiao (Sheryl) Li, Assistant Professor was asked for her autobiography, and she wrote:

"I grew up in a small City named Nanchong in Sichuan province of China, which is located in the southwest of China and famous for the spicy food. My father was a civil engineer and my mother was an accountant. When off work, my father told interesting stories to my sister and me, made toys for us, and fixed all kinds of electronics for the family and sometimes for the neighbors for free. With a bachelors degree in Mechanical Engineer, which is rare in my parents' generation in China, my father was regarded by me for a long time as the most knowledgeable and handy person. It was then when I decided that I would go to college and earn a bachelors degree."

" (As a kid, I had never heard of Ph.D. and bachelors was the highest degree I knew.) Since both of my parents had full-time jobs at that time, they had to go to work and leave my sister and me alone at home in the day time. Fortunately, my sister is only one year older than me. She is the sweet, beautiful and adorable girl of the family, and more importantly my best friend. As the younger kid in the family, I was always the troubled one. In kindergarten, I unscrewed every part of the only mechanical clock we had and did not know how to put it back. My father tried to clean out all the mess I made, if I was lucky, before my mother found out."

"Unfortunately for me, my sister was a perfect student in school too and always got the highest score in all exams. I was not bad and usually in top three of the class, but not as good as she was. Eleven years after our graduation, my sister and I accidentally met one of our teachers in the school. She immediately recalled my sister's name and referred me simply as 'the sister of her best student'. Luckily, my parents were satisfied with both of us and gave us a lot of freedom. Thus, we went to the same elementary school, middle school, high school, and university."

"I attended Peking University in 1995 and had a fantastic four-year in Beijing. I was active in several students' organizations at the departmental and university levels, made many friends, and learned a lot from them. More importantly, I met some outstanding scientists in Chemistry. Their enthusiasm

towards Chemistry deeply impressed me. Professor Hongcheng Gao was one of them. I took his Physical Chemistry as a junior student. Frankly speaking, physical chemistry is not an easy subject if you really want to understand it. Somehow, Prof. Gao made the complicated equations and phenomena not-so-hard for us to understand. In fact, I was intrigued by his lectures. Thus, I talked with Prof. Gao directly one day after class and asked if I could do some research in his lab. Lucky for me, he let me in even though he did not plan to have any undergraduates that semester.

"My project was studying the structure-property relationship of emulsions. To characterize the emulsion, I got the chance to use many different analytical instruments, learn how to interpret the results and more importantly how to integrate them to a common and reasonable conclusion. During the last year, as I learned more and more from Prof. Gao and Dr. Jiang, a graduate student in the lab at that time, I decided to pursue higher education in Chemistry."

Dr. Li in her office in BSF

"I attended the University of Illinois at Urbana /Champaign for graduate school in 1999 and received my degree in 2004. I chose to work for Prof. Andrew A. Gewirth. He had a wonderful group of students who had highly diverse background and more importantly were willing to exchange scientific ideas and help each other. Group lunch every Friday was the best time for me to learn the interesting aspects of different cultures. Dr. Gewirth is a great advisor to work for. He gave us a lot of freedom. My initial project was studying the catalytic electroreduction process of hydrogen peroxide on bismuth modified gold electrode. Since I started out with a new technique (surface-enhanced Raman spectroscopy) in the group, he let me play with the instrumental parts for near one year without getting any "useful information" but noise. Eventually, we got some exciting results from the experiments with the help of many scientists like the staff members from Material Research Laboratory. Then, we came to another obstacle of interpreting the results. We tried several experimental methods without success. Finally, we turned to simulation. Amazingly, the two approaches agreed well with each other and helped us understand the catalytic process in molecular level."

" During those frustrating times, Dr. Gewirth was always encouraging. During the five years in his lab, I learned so much not only in a scientific way such as how to do research, but also in other aspects like being a mentor. He himself is a role model of a great advisor. It was also during this five years, I met my husband, Zeming, and got married. "

"After my degree, I continued my studies as a postdoctoral fellow for Dr. Allen J. Bard at University of Texas at Austin. In these two years, I further developed my expertise in electrochemistry and began my learning in biology. My project involved extending the application of electrochemical methods on biological systems. Luckily, we found a

new way of detecting the viability of cells using ultramicroelectrode *in vitro*, which is very promising for single cell investigation. I enjoyed and learned a lot working in Dr. Bard's lab. It is the most dynamic research group I have ever been with 21 members from 15 different countries at that time. Dr. Bard is an amazing scientist. I was constantly impressed by his enthusiasm, experiences, and alertness in science."

"To ensure my interests in teaching, I started my academic career as an *ad interim* assistant professor at The University of Texas A&M at Commerce. Commerce is an extremely small town with only two grocery stores. Fortunately, colleagues in the Chemistry Department were very nice. This nine-month experience further strengthened my interests and confidence in academic."

"Thus, I came to USF. My lab is currently under renovation with two graduate students and will be well equipped with up-to-date instrumentation in optical spectroscopy and electrochemistry. We are all excited about the chemistry that is going to happen in this lab."

REU News

REU is a research experience for undergraduates and was initiated as an NSF-supported summer program with a three-year grant, as noted in previous issues of *News*. The program was adapted to the fall and spring semesters starting with the fall of 2005 and some 70 students. The program will continue in the Spring semester with the Assistance of Dr. Patricia Muisener.

About campus…

Barbara and **Dean Martin** recently received a photograph taken at the 100th victory of the Women's Soccer team. They were honored for having established the first endowed scholarship for women soccer team members.

Head Coach Denise Shilte-Brown with team co-captains and the Martins

The Martins were presented with a soccer ball (see picture) that had been autographed by all the team.

What's New?

We are trying to keep track of our chemistry alumni, and it is a challenge because of the tendency for persons to move about.
Would you be willing to help?

Please go to our Web page [http: chemistry.usf.edu] find "Important Links" Box and click on "Graduate Alumni". Find your name on the Ph.D., Masters, or Bachelor's list. The last list is a work in

progress, as are all, but even more so than the other two listings.

News and feedback

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News
For past issues of *News* you may have missed, please see the Home Page.

News for us or comments? Please write to dmartin@cas.usf.edu