

AN EVENING TO REMEMBER

by Larry Manziek



Founding Chemistry Faculty - ca. 1969

Left to right - Peter Tanner, Jerry Gurst, Cliff Chang, Ralph Birdwhistell, Grace Chiu and Bill Halpern

On December 8, 2007, over 60 faculty members, current and former students, friends and family met at the Pensacola Cultural Center and enjoyed an exciting evening celebrating not only the retirement of Drs. Gurst and Tanner but also a tribute to the Founding Faculty of the Chemistry Department at the University of West Florida.

Dr. Larry Manziek (Class of 70) emceed the evening's activities. Larry welcomed everyone and took a few minutes to describe some of the words he felt were relevant to describe the evening that was about to unfold:

1. Reflection: Tonight we have the unique opportunity to look back over 40 years of history and refocus on those memories that are unique to each of us.
2. Recognition: Tonight we have the unique opportunity to properly recognize the contributions of those who made a lifetime commitment to a dream that began 40 years ago.
3. Dedication: Tonight we will be able to sense and experience first hand what dedication means to each of us and how it influences our lives.
4. Commitment: Tonight we will all experience the meaning of commitment as lived by the Faculty of the Chemistry Department over the past 40 years.
5. Celebration: Tonight we will share in the unique interactive opportunity that has been presented and also share in Jerry's and Peter's retirement.
6. Closure: This evening we will bring to a close Volume I of the Annals of the UWF Department of Chemistry history.
7. Anticipation: Tonight we will all share in the beginning of Volume II and the opportunity to be a part of the next chapter.

Larry also noted that although the evening was one of celebration, the memory of those Founding Faculty members no longer with us- Drs. Birdwhistell, Chang, and Chiu temper it. Although they are gone, they will never be forgotten.

2008 Newsletter

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



The 18 months since our last newsletter has been very interesting to say the least. There have been many fantastic events, some troubling news, and a few sad notes as well. Let's start with the good. The Department has seen substantial growth in chemistry majors over the past several years. As of the fall 2007 term, there were ~100 chemistry majors on the UWF campus. Based on our plans, we would like to keep the number consistent at approximately this level until a time where we can add more faculty. Based on the number of faculty, amount of equipment, and facilities, additional majors would cause significant hardships. We have also seen increased enrollment in the general chemistry courses due to growth in other UWF science programs, biology, nursing, etc. During the 2007-2008 academic year, we had ~420 students enroll in General Chemistry I and ~110 students in the Fundamentals of General Chemistry (nursing and environmental studies majors). As of July 21st, we already have 265+ students enrolled in General Chemistry I for the Fall 2008 term.

As well documented in the newsletter and other announcements, Drs. Peter Tanner and Jerome Gurst retired in December, 2008 from the Department after 40+ years at UWF. They are deeply missed on campus. Fortunately, we have been able to move Dr. Glenroy Martin, an organic chemist, into a tenure track position effective January, 2008. Dr. Amy Meyers, UWF Class of 2000, also joined us as a visiting lecturer. At the time of writing this newsletter, we anticipate conducting a search for an inorganic chemist during the 2008-2009 academic year. In the interim time period, the Department has increased its use of adjunct faculty to help teach our ever-growing course offerings.

The department was fortunate to obtain new instruments. Thanks to Dr. Rao and the Center for Environmental Diagnostics and Bioremediation, we obtained a Differential Scanning Calorimeter (DSC) and a liquid scintillation counter through a sharing of technology money. The Mettler DSC 823 is being incorporated into the Instrumental Analysis course and is housed in the instrument room. Dr. Vaughan says that the software-controlled instrument is very easy to operate. One major advantage is that it captures sample data and saves every run rather than over-writing subsequent runs. This will benefit students who will not lose valuable data which was obtained over a long time period. The Perkin-Elmer Tri-Carb 2900TR fully automatic scintillation counter is housed in the radiochemistry lab and is being used primarily for research activities. Dr. Vaughan has been utilizing it to measure bacterial growth rates.

Unfortunately, the State of Florida has been leading the way into the gloomy national economic picture that we are all currently experiencing. This has lead to significant budget cuts at UWF and almost all other state agencies. We are moving into our second year of reduced budgets and resources. Thus far, we have survived with only some reductions in our operating budget. Other departments have not been so fortunate. We are anticipating ~8% budget reduction for this coming year, but unfortunately it could get worse. Some are predicting another round of cuts during the late fall or early spring which could bring the total reductions to as much as 12%.

In addition, President John Cavanaugh left UWF effective July 1, 2008. On May 12, the Board of Governors of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education named President Cavanaugh as their next Chancellor. Judy Bense, recent chair and professor of the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, as well as the executive director of the Division of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of West Florida, was named interim president for UWF by the Board of Trustees, making her the first female president in UWF's history. A national search will be conducted for a new UWF President during the 2008-2009 academic year.

FACULTY UPDATES

As new faculty arrive, two professors are preparing to depart after 40 years of service to the department. Drs. Peter Tanner and Jerry Gurst will be retiring at the end of the fall 2007 semester. Peter and Jerry have been here since 1967. They have been instrumental in building one of the best undergraduate chemistry programs in Florida. Their model of uncompromising high standards has been instilled in our current faculty. We value their advice and will miss seeing them in the halls on a daily basis. Both Peter and Jerry plan on keeping their Pensacola residences as their primary homes. Peter and Barbara are looking forward to more extensive traveling.

As you might expect, both Peter and Jerry continued to be active professionally. Right up to retirement Peter spent the summer of 2007 in Melbourne, Australia at Monash University working on assessment strategies for the sciences. Jerry co-chaired the 29th Gulf Coast Chemistry Conference in August 2007 at Pensacola Beach. He attended the 11th Annual International Conference on Circular Dichroism in The Netherlands in September, 2007.

FACULTY UPDATES CONTINUED...

Dr. Michael Huggins was awarded tenure and promoted to the rank of Associate Professor. He continues to ably lead the department as our chair. He is the chair-elect of the local section of the American Chemical Society. Mike's research lab was extremely busy during the summer semester with Project SEED and UWF students actively conducting research.

We are delighted that Dr. Glenroy "Dean" Martin accepted our offer to become the newest tenure-track assistant professor. He will make his transition to an assistant professor position in January, 2008. Since his appointment in the fall of 2006, he has taught a wide variety of courses including: Organic Chemistry, General Chemistry, Fundamentals of Chemistry and Biochemistry, and Concepts in Chemistry. He has been very active in establishing interdisciplinary collaborations within the university. His research work is focused on the isolation of bioactive compounds from medicinal plants, marine microorganisms and marine invertebrates (such as sponge and soft corals).

Dr. Tim Royappa was recognized for his outstanding achievements in teaching by receiving the 2006-2007 Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award for the College of Arts and Sciences. This is the third time that Tim has received this award! Tim is part of an interdisciplinary team that won the \$1.5 million "Math Matters" grant from the Florida Department of Education to make game software for teaching middle school mathematics. Dr. Tim Royappa was awarded the 2008 Gabor Award for Excellence.

Dr. Pamela Tanner continues to coordinate the general chemistry laboratory program. In the fall of 2006, she participated in a studioE UWF Faculty Development course for eLearning Excellence. During this time, she developed a Concepts in Chemistry lecture course which was taught in the fully on-line format during the summer of 2007. Students were enrolled from as far away as Iceland and New York City.

Dr. Leo ter Haar continued to divide his time in 2007/2008 between teaching in the Chemistry department and serving as chair of the UWF Computer Science department while also serving as the Interim Director for the new School of Science and Engineering (SSE.) In May 2008, it was announced that he has been elected as Director of SSE where he now oversees the Physics, Mathematics & Statistics, Computer Science, Computer Information Systems, Information Technology, Software Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Computer Engineering, and Pre-Engineering programs. The School held a March groundbreaking for the new \$32M SSE building currently slated for occupancy in 2010.

Dr. Pamela Vaughan attended the national ACS meeting in Chicago. Her student, Katherine Davis, presented a poster entitled "Quantification of Photochemically Produced Hydroxyl Radical from Chlorinated Quinone Pesticides." The poster was authored by Katherine Davis, Diane Ann and Pamela Vaughan. In addition, Dr. Vaughan has assumed the role of Project SEED Coordinator for the Department. She was awarded the 2007-2008 Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award for the College of Arts and Sciences.

In Memoriam

Dr. Clifford Chang ~ 1938 - 2007



With regret, we must inform you that Professor Emeritus Clifford Chang died on Monday, October 15th, 2007 in Hawaii. After living in Pensacola for forty years, Cliff had returned to Honolulu in December 2006. Following heart surgery in the late spring of 2007, complications arose and he was unable to leave the hospital.

Cliff was a member of the Chemistry Department from 1968 until his retirement in 2003. Dr. Chang came to the mainland from Hawaii and received his BS from the University of Southern California in 1960. He returned to Hawaii and earned the Ph. D. degree which was awarded in 1964 by the University of Hawaii. From 1964 through 1968, he was a post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Georgia. He came to UWF in 1968 as an assistant professor and worked his way through the ranks to full professor. During his UWF tenure, he conducted research in organic chemistry, particularly marine natural products chemistry, and worked with scientists at Monsanto (now Solutia) during many summers. He spent a sabbatical leave at the University of Oklahoma, and a number of summers associated with the University of Hawaii. He authored five book chapters, 29 journal articles and seven technical reports at Monsanto (Solutia). Over the years, he served on many departmental, college and university-level committees. And his teaching was recognized with a TIP (Teaching Incentive Program) Award.

Throughout his career, Cliff worked with the Pensacola Section of the American Chemical Society (ACS) in a variety of positions including the Chairmanship. Perhaps most significant is that he served as a representative of the local section at national meetings of the ACS as Alternate Councilor and then Councilor for almost 30 years. In addition, Cliff was very active with the American Chemical Society as member of numerous national committees.

He is survived by his mother and his siblings, two sisters and three brothers along with their families.

The Clifford W. J. Chang Memorial Scholarship Endowment has been established by the Chang family and friends. The endowment will provide need-based scholarships for upper-division students majoring in the sciences at UWF. Scholarship awards will be determined by the UWF Financial Aid Office.

UWF Chemistry

Support The Department

GIVING TO THE DEPARTMENT

We hope that you are as proud of the Chemistry Department at UWF as we are, and your continued help will enable us to move forward to the next stage of our development. Gifts from alumni and friends help to enhance the quality of our educational programs and enable us to constantly raise our standards of excellence. Since the Department offers only undergraduate degrees in chemistry, all resources have a direct impact on our undergraduate students. Specifically, funds are used in one or more of three target areas and support our teaching and research as well as offer academic enhancements for students and faculty. Every gift is significant and appreciated! In addition, all gifts to the UWF Chemistry Department are tax deductible. The UWF alumni and friends website provides more information on how to make a gift to UWF at <https://secure.uwf.edu/development/giving/online>. Be sure to indicate your gift is intended for the Chemistry Department.

As many of you know, the Department has undertaken an effort to increase the scholarship funds available to our students. Currently, there are two major projects underway. The Founding Chemistry Faculty Endowment is being created to provide scholarships in honor of Drs. Birdwhistell, Chang, Chiu, Gurst, Halpern, and Tanner. We initiated this campaign back in early spring of this year, and to date we have received ~\$3,500 in pledges and contributions. Our goal is to have \$25,000 in this endowment, and we have four years to reach this level. We must raise a minimum of \$20,000 in order to create the endowed account. During the coming months, I will be contacting many of you directly about potential support for this initiative. For those that have already contributed – THANK YOU!!

In addition, I have been working with several of the local companies in an effort to have them support scholarships for Chemistry Majors at UWF. Most of them benefit from the fantastic products produced by the Department, our well-trained students. Thus far, our proposals have been well-received, but have not resulted any direct support. I am optimistic and hope to have some announcements about corporate sponsored scholarships very soon. Below you will find some additional information about where financial contributions to the Department are used and needed. In addition to those areas, we are always in need of money for new equipment and instrumentation.

SCHOLARSHIPS IN CHEMISTRY

During the past few years, there has been tremendous growth and change in the Department of Chemistry – new faculty, new degrees, growth in number of students (currently ~100 chemistry majors on campus), increase in research activities, and much more. As we have grown, the need for additional scholarship funds for our undergraduate students has also increased. For the past several years, the Department has been able to award scholarships to only about 10% of our chemistry majors. With your help, we can begin to increase the number of students receiving scholarships to a substantially larger percentage.

- Pledge to make a long-term commitment to support a scholarship program in chemistry with annual gifts. The amount and number of scholarships can vary.
- Establish an endowed scholarship with a minimum donation of \$20,000, gift can be given over a four year period. This will establish a permanent scholarship at UWF. The scholarship award will be based on 4% annually taken from the interest. Of course, the larger the endowment is, then the greater the impact will be. In addition, State of Florida matching funds become available at donations of \$100,000 or larger.
- Make an annual gift without a long term commitment based on the current circumstances.

CHEMISTRY RESEARCH

One significant change for the Department of Chemistry in recent years has been the move to involve our undergraduates in research projects alongside our new faculty members. In addition to the immediate impact that your donation will have on the department's current research activity, there is the potential for a long term impact on the success rate of applications for research grants submitted by faculty members. Many of today's funding agencies look at the current level of research activity in the department, and the level of University and Department support for research, as major factors that influence their decisions to fund or not to fund. Thus, having resources to increase the department's research activities now has a positive effect on our success in acquiring future funding from outside agencies such as Research Corporation, the American Chemical Society's Petroleum Research Fund, National Science Foundation, etc.

- Support summer research fellowships for UWF students conducting undergraduate research
- Provide funds for purchase of instruments for use in research and teaching labs
- Matching funds for grant proposals from external funding agencies

2006-2007 CHEMISTRY SUPPORTERS

The Department would like to thank the following alumni and friends for their generous support during the 2006-2007 academic year. This allows us to offer undergraduate student scholarships and awards, in addition to enhancing our instructional and research activities. Thank you very much and we hope you can continue this philanthropic support.

American Chemical Society, Pensacola Section
Dr. and Mrs. Bernard L. Atwell
Dr. and Mrs. Carl A. Backman
Mr. and Mrs. Wayne F. Beyer, Jr
Dr. Kurt R. Birdwhistell
Mrs. Miriam P. Birdwhistell
Mr. Scot P. Birdwhistell
Mrs. Toni Zobrisky Bray
Drs. Christie and Wayne Brouillette
Mrs. Elizabeth S. Calhoun
Mr. Marion H. Cates, Jr.
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Dr. and Mrs. Stephen P. Tanner
Dr. and Mrs. Dean A. Van Galen
Dr. Pamela P. Vaughan
Mr. David C. Waterman
Drs. Charles and Patricia Wentz

2007-2008 UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS IN CHEMISTRY

The Department of Chemistry has awarded \$12,500 in scholarships for the 2007-2008 academic year to nine undergraduate chemistry students. Julia Balazh has been awarded a Ralph K. Birdwhistell Scholarship. To be selected for this prestigious award, a junior or senior chemistry student must show a potential to make substantial contributions in the field of chemistry. Katie Eanes and Jessica Nicewonder have been named Grace Po-Yuen Chiu Scholars. Both scholarships are funded by endowments which honor founding members of the UWF Department of Chemistry.

The Department of Chemistry also awarded scholarships to Tyler Butler, Sarah Genet, Taren Walton, Scott Shaw, Melinda Bottenfield, and Megan Chapman. These students have demonstrated excellent performance in their chemistry programs. The faculty of the Department of Chemistry are very pleased and proud to be able to provide financial support to students pursuing an education in chemistry.

All scholarship awards are supported entirely from the very generous donations of alumni, faculty and friends of the UWF Department of Chemistry.



WILLIAM D. SMART SEMINAR SERIES IN CHEMISTRY

Inaugural Speaker



William Smart (seated) and Sir Harold Kroto (right) in discussions at the Dorr House in downtown Pensacola.

The highlight of Dr. Kroto’s third day in Pensacola was the opportunity for the chemistry majors to have a lengthy lunch with him. This was followed by Dr. Kroto’s lecture on nanotechnology which began with his discovery of buckminsterfullerene (“buckyballs”). The large lecture hall in Building 58A was filled for his exciting and interesting presentation. A final reception, sponsored by the Pensacola Section of the American Chemical Society and the UWF Student Affiliate group followed that lecture.

One related event will tell you something about Sir Harry and his convictions about the educational process. He interrupted a conversation with a faculty member to make a call back to England. Two young boys in England had sent him a question by email, and he called to answer their question!

We can only hope that future editions of this seminar series will be as interesting and inspiring as this first edition. Once again, we express our deepest appreciation to Mr. and Mrs. William D. Smart for making it possible for this to happen.

PROJECT SEED

The American Chemical Society’s Project SEED program provides a fellowship to economically disadvantaged high school students who participate in summer research at an academic, government or industrial laboratory. This summer the Department of Chemistry at the University of West Florida had the pleasure of working with three Project SEED students. Eric Oliver (Pace High School), summer II student, project title: Quantification of Photochemically Produced Reactive Oxygen Species by Quinones; David Florian (Catholic High School), summer II student, project title: Synthesis and Characterization of Pyrrole Amides; Alexandra Guenter (Pace High School), summer I student, project title: Water purity analysis at a coal fired power plant.

As part of this summer experience, students attended campus and library orientations, career counseling, and a tour of our local Gulf Power facility. In addition, all students participating in Project SEED attended mandatory safety and hazardous waste training before beginning their research. Upon completion of the program, students had an opportunity to present their results at a joint meeting and poster session between the UWF Department of Chemistry and the Pensacola Section American Chemical Society (ACS) held August 10th.

We would like to thank to the sponsors for this year’s program: the American Chemical Society, Gulf Power (Southern Company), Pall Membrane Technology, Taminco, Pensacola Section of the ACS, and the University of West Florida, Office of Sponsored Research.

WORKSHOPS FOR IB CHEMISTRY STUDENTS HELD AT UWF

The Chemistry Department had the pleasure of continuing its working relationship with the International Baccalaureate Program at Pensacola High School on Friday, Feb 29th. Thirty-six students from the senior IB chemistry course, under the direction of Ms. Dana Nagel (a UWF alumnae) were treated to a full day workshop on organic chemistry, stereochemistry and spectroscopy. After an opening lecture by Dr. Huggins, the group was assigned to smaller units. Some went to the laboratory where they conducted a two-hour laboratory experiment under the guidance of Mr. Larry Smith (an adjunct faculty) and Patrick Ward, an undergraduate. Others began a sequence of four thirty minute lecture/demonstrations from several UWF Chemistry faculty members on various instrumental techniques used to characterize organic molecules. The demonstrators included Dr. Glenroy Martin, Dr. Pam Vaughan, Dr. Jerome Gurst, Dr. Amy Meyers, and Dr. Carl Anderson (visiting faculty from Michigan). After a lunch break, the students who had attended the lecture/demonstrations went to the laboratory, and vice-versa. At the end of the day, all students attended a wrap-up lecture presented by Michael Huggins. This workshop is a vital component to the chemistry curriculum at Pensacola High School which allows for the course to be eligible for IB credit.



In addition, forty students from the junior IB chemistry class visited the department to conduct a series of laboratory experiments on April 24th. The student conducted experiments using liquid nitrogen to study heat of vaporization and learned about chromatography while performing separations with paper chromatography. The students also enjoyed an hour of extraordinary chemical demonstrations by Dr. Tim Royappa. Dr. Amy Meyers spearheaded this event with the help of several adjunct faculty (Swadesh Samanta and Art Carrnick) and student helpers. The students were also treated to lunch and campus tours by the Admissions Office. This event even garnered some press from the Pensacola New Journal.

AN EVENING TO REMEMBER

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There were many highlights of the evening. The viewing of numerous memorabilia, pictures etc. covering 40 years of the Department on display for all to reflect upon, the spontaneous exchange of stories between former and current students, the stories of Jerry’s passion for Porsches and Peter’s love of his yellow Triumph (yes, he still has it and is often seen going down Scenic Highway). The evening also revealed a little known secret of who put the RKB stick-on letters on Ralph’s old car that he refused to give up driving and that was routinely parked by an elegant new vehicle with hand lettered initials. Ralph never removed those initials and the secret will remain with those who attended. Many stories were shared and it was clear that there was and still remains a special bond between this faculty and their students. Both Jerry and Peter gave heartfelt farewell speeches, with both genuinely looking forward to retirement. Peter was quite animated with his speech and for

many of us showed a humor and wit not often seen. It was clear to all attendees that both Jerry and Peter enjoyed the evening and appreciated the unique opportunity to see the products of their lifelong commitment to education. One can only wonder what emotions are triggered when you see so many former students at one time come out to celebrate with you your life’s work.

In addition to the retirement gifts presented to Jerry and Peter, Peter was also surprised by a special gift from his final Inorganic Chemistry class. Mike Huggins gave an enjoyable PowerPoint presentation that covered the past 40 years of the Department with numerous pictures etc. and it was truly a trip down memory lane. Pam Tanner presented the tribute to the Founding Faculty of the Chemistry Department at UWF...a large portrait of each of the six Founding Members who committed their careers to the Department and UWF, along with a plaque with the following inscription: “Building the Department of Chemistry One Student at a Time through a Lifetime Commitment to Academic Excellence”. The portraits and plaque will hang on the wall in the Chemistry Department to forever recognize those who gave so unselfishly to so many for so long.

Larry then presented to Mike Huggins a new Journal with clear instructions as to his responsibility of capturing Volume II for the Annals of the UWF Chemistry Department. The evening closed with Larry addressing the audience and asking each to continue remembering the Chemistry Department and its contribution to their lives, and to “give back” to the Department whenever possible.

UWF Chemistry News

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