Passing of founding professor and former dean Hal Moore

Thursday, October 24, 2019

Hal received his B.S. in chemistry from Colorado State University in 1959 and his Ph.D. in organic chemistry from the University of Illinois in 1963. He did two years of postdoctoral work at Stanford Research Institute before joining the founding faculty at UCI in the fall of 1965. During his tenure as faculty, Hal served two terms as chair of the Department of Chemistry and from 1985-1994 he served as dean of the School of Physical Sciences. He co-authored more than 200 papers and was very proud of having mentored over 40 students to their doctorate degrees. He received several academic distinctions, including a UCI Distinguished Teaching Award and the 2017-18 Daniel G. Aldrich, Jr. Distinguished University Service Award.

Moore’s research interest was in organic chemistry with a main goal of discovering new methods to prepare high-value molecules. Moore’s early research at UCI centered on the complex chemical reactions of hydroxy- and azidoquinones. One of the products of such transformations were cyanoketenes, highly reactive small molecules that could be employed to fashion many molecules including beta-lactams, the reactive unit of penicillin and cephalosporin antibiotics. In 1977, Moore published an influential review that elaborated in mechanistic detail the bioactivation of naturally occurring and synthetic anticancer compounds in hypoxic tumor cells.

Hired in 1965 by Professor F. Sherwood Rowland as an assistant professor, Moore was the department’s first synthetic organic researcher. He became an inspiring mentor and friend to subsequent generations of organic chemistry faculty recruited to UCI. He helped establish the style and tone of the chemistry department and that spirit of working together for the common good has been a critical factor in its growth and notable success.

In addition to his unwavering commitment to his research, his students, and to UCI,

Hal was a talented musician and greatly enjoyed playing the clarinet. From his youthful days with a tin clarinet, he broadened into playing most of the clarinets and saxophones in classical and jazz genres ranging from small group concerts to big band galas. Hal enjoyed performing many years as a member of the Interactions Jazz Ensemble and the Laguna Beach Concert Band.

Hal was married for 60 years to Cathy Moore, whom he met in an organic chemistry class at Colorado State University. He is survived by his daughter Barbara Borgeson, his son-in-law, Dale Borgeson, his son David Moore, and his two grandsons Aaron Borgeson and Evan Borgeson. A private family burial service at sea is planned.

A valuable friend and colleague to many, Hal will be dearly missed. Our condolences go out to his wife, Cathy, and the rest of his family.

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