

# THE PERIODIC TABLOID

from Wayne State's Department of Chemistry

WINTER 2016

## ACS student chapter gains honors, recognition



By Aivy Dao

Wayne State's American Chemical Society (ACS) student chapter accomplished many great feats this

year, beginning with bringing home the Separatory Funnel trophy from Michigan State University's Battle of the Chemistry Clubs. The event is an annual chemistry competition between the state's college and university chemistry clubs. The trophy is awarded for overall first place.

The win kicked off a great year for the chapter. In February, the ACS hosted its third annual For the Love of Chemistry symposium, featuring a variety of speakers, ranging

from the CEO of a pharmaceutical manufacturing company to a beer chemist. The symposium provided a great opportunity for students to ask questions of chemists working in a variety of areas, receive advice and see how they arrived in their current positions. Following the symposium, the organization hosted its first undergraduate research poster session, displaying work from four different Michigan universities.

ACS also gave back to the community, working with the Michigan Science Center's summer camp by performing demonstrations, giving laboratory tours of Wayne State's chemistry department, and serving liquid nitrogen ice cream to children ages

6-12. A popular offering of the ACS, liquid nitrogen ice cream was made a total of five times by ACS students this summer for a variety of events.

Other notable accomplishments include receiving the Outstanding Chapter Award during the ACS National Meeting in San Diego. This is the highest award given to ACS student chapters. Students also attended the ACS's 253rd National Meeting in San Francisco and hosted the fourth annual symposium, Falling for Chemistry, in October. The symposium featured an associate professor from the University of Nevada whose research topics include chemical ecology, a wine chemist and WSU alumna, a chemistry educator and application developer, a hygiene officer involved in the Flint water crisis, and an industry speaker. The organization also received new additions, as a few former board members moved on with their educations and careers. Nate Hardin, former chapter president, graduated and is pursuing a Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of Michigan with a focus on inorganic materials. Caroline Teets, former treasurer, has moved to Texas to work as vice president of guest relations for Gary Con Enterprises; she has also been accepted to several Ph.D. neurology programs. Wayne State's ACS student chapter looks forward to the new academic year and has many plans to increase student activity and interest in chemistry on campus and throughout Detroit.

Photo by Yasmine Elghoul





## LETTER FROM THE **CHAIR**

This newsletter is intended to keep friends and alumni of the Wayne State University Department of Chemistry up to date with what is going on in the department. For the sake of being concise, I will focus on the past year in this note. First, I would like to introduce myself as the new chair of the department. I am honored to have been selected by College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Dean Wayne Raskind and humbled by the history of this department. Since becoming chair over the summer, I have been working to maintain and add to its legacy. I thank **Jim Rigby** and **Chuck Winter** for their 15 years of service as chair and associate chair of the department, a time that included a major building renovation.

This is an exciting time for the department, and quite a lot has happened. The following highlights are listed in no particular order, and provide a small sampling of all that is going on: **Mary Rodgers** was elected a fellow of the American Physical Society. **Christine Chow** was elected as an ACS fellow in 2015 and held a visiting professorship in the Institute for Advanced Energy in 2016 at Kyoto University. **Sarah Trimpin** was promoted to full professor, received a Career Development Chair Award and was named one of 2016's Top 50 Women in Analytical Science by *The Analytical Scientist*. **Claudio Verani** received the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching. **Tamara Hendrickson** received a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Teaching Award. **David Crich** was selected as the 2016 recipient of the Claude S. Hudson Award from the ACS Division of Carbohydrate Chemistry. **Jennifer Stockdill** received a CAREER Award from the National Science Foundation. **Stephanie Brock** became an editor for *Chemistry of Materials*. **Federico Rabuffetti** received a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) on his first attempt as an assistant professor, giving him the distinction of having the highest funding success rate (100 percent) with the NSF in the department.

Our students are also thriving. **Levi Ekanger** (Allen Lab, Ph.D. 2016, now a postdoc at Caltech) received the Outstanding Poster Award at the Metals in Medicine Gordon Research Conference, **Christine Hart** (Stockdill Lab) was chosen as the first student to participate in a new internship program with Boehringer Ingelheim in the summer of 2016, and **Marissa Kerrigan** (Winter Lab) received the Best Highlights Talk award at the 16th International Conference on Atomic Layer Deposition in Dublin. The department also welcomed **Mary Iverson** as its new director of social media.

The remainder of this newsletter contains stories about **Tom Linz**, our new analytical faculty member; our recently departed colleagues **John Oliver**, **Ron Schroeder** and **Mary Wood**; our revamping of the department's graduate curriculum; the generosity of **Sharon Kelley** to the department; the **WSU Student Chapter of the ACS** — which received the Outstanding Chapter Award from the ACS and won the Battle of the Chem Clubs against the other chemistry clubs in Michigan — and a list of recent graduates and award winners in the department.

For alumni, please stay in touch. Send updates with your outstanding achievements and new jobs so that we can include them in future newsletters, and be sure to share this newsletter with anyone for whom we do not have a current address. Also, next time you are in the Detroit area, please let us know and stop by to see the building and meet with old friends, colleagues and mentors. Finally, be sure to follow us on social media (see back cover).

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Allen  
Professor and Chair

# Changes to graduate student requirements

By Garrett S. Roberts

The Department of Chemistry has announced changes to the graduate student requirements, particularly the written requirement. Instead of taking cumulative exams, graduate students will develop, write and defend a research proposal to their oral examination committee. Jeremy Kodanko, associate chair and current director of graduate studies in the department, said that the purpose is to help prepare students for careers in chemistry while they advance to candidacy on the way to earning a Ph.D.

With the new requirements, students must present information outside of

their own research, develop an idea for the research proposal and defend their claim. This will require the students to process scientific literature outside of their immediate area and build upon past evidence to come up with new ideas.

Graduate Advisor Melissa Barton said that the decision to change the writing portion was due to assessing whether the old exams were fully displaying the knowledge of the students. She said that even though the writing portion has changed, there is no overall change to the curriculum. The subject of the research proposal is up to the individual and has to be

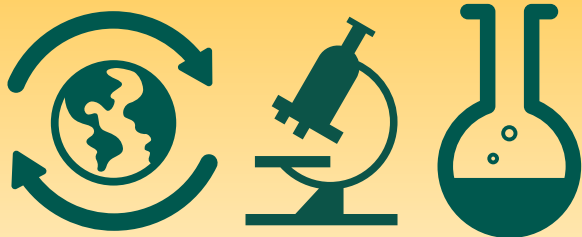
within their own division.

Mary Kay Pflum, former director of graduate studies in the department, said students will have the ability to design and innovate new projects and improve their skills as analytical thinkers, helping them grow as researchers. The role of the faculty in the proposals is to provide guidance, but not to be overly involved with the research proposals that students create. Although faculty members are making changes to the written portion of the graduate student requirements, all requirements are being assessed for effectiveness and will continue to evolve.



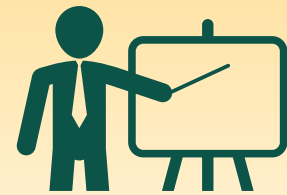
Photo by Melissa Barton

*The fall 2016 class of first-year grad students will be the first to study under the Department of Chemistry's new requirements designed to better assist them as they prepare for their careers.*



## What are you up to? We want to know!

We're eager to hear about your successes in the years since you've graduated from Wayne State University. Please visit [chem.wayne.edu](http://chem.wayne.edu) to update your alumni profile. If you would like an update to appear in the next edition of this newsletter, please contact us at [info@chem.wayne.edu](mailto:info@chem.wayne.edu). We can't wait to see what you've been up to!



## Meet our new faculty member

By Garrett S. Roberts

The Department of Chemistry welcomed Tom Linz, Ph.D., as a new assistant professor in 2016. Originally from the Chicago area, Linz obtained a B.S. in chemistry from Truman State University in Missouri. He then attended the University of Kansas to perform his doctoral work under the direction of Susan Lunte. During his training, he developed diagnostic methods to measure biomarkers of heart and lung diseases from clinical samples. Upon earning his Ph.D., Linz moved to the University of North Carolina, where he was a postdoctoral researcher in the lab of J. Michael Ramsey, developing bioanalytical assays for a point-of-care diagnostics system. Now that he has completed his training and moved on to an independent career, Linz said he is proud to call Michigan — and Wayne State University — home.

What impressed Linz most when he first visited the Department of Chemistry was the faculty dynamic

and how their friendly, professional demeanor created a great work environment. Linz admitted that he was excited during his interview because he wanted to become part of WSU's strong faculty network and benefit from the great support the university provides to new professors to help them carry out their research. Now that his appointment has officially begun, Linz said he is eager to get his research lab up and running. He said that having a career that allows him to design new projects and share his passion for science with the graduate students who join his lab is a dream come true.

Linz's primary research interest lies in designing microfluidic assays for bioanalytical applications. Microfluidics uses integrated networks of microchannels configured to analyze low-volume samples and measure various biological components of interest. The Linz Group plans to

evolve this technology to provide unprecedented temporal information for low-abundance analytes, which would be of great benefit to numerous disciplines, including biochemistry and the pharmaceutical sciences.

Although happy to spend long hours on campus pursuing his scientific interests, Linz also enjoys activities outside of the lab. A craft beer enthusiast, he said that Detroit was a great city to move to because of its thriving beer scene. Linz and his wife have spent many weekends exploring local breweries and trying to find a favorite among the dozens in the metro area. He is also an avid sports fan, with particular interests in hockey, football and college basketball. Although his favorite teams leave much to be desired due to his Chicago upbringing, hopefully a little more time spent in Michigan will show him the light and convert him into a Detroit fan.

# CHEMISTRY AND FOOD FRIDAYS

help students grow, network

By Chris Williams

This fall, graduate students in the Department of Chemistry have had an opportunity to learn more about potential careers, speak with experts and plan their next steps — with a free lunch included.

The department launched Chemistry and Food Fridays (CFF) this semester, a 10-session event held from noon to 1 p.m. on Fridays in 2025 Science Hall. The luncheon sessions provide a low-stress environment for graduate students to build their communication skills, network, enhance their knowledge and build friendships.

CFF lunches are geared toward chemistry graduate students and

postdoctoral fellows, although undergrads from Wayne State University and area colleges who are interested in pursuing a graduate education are also encouraged to attend. Students enjoy a delicious lunch, network with fellow students and guests, and hear from an array of speakers from within the department and outside of it.

“We have had a mix of topics so far,” said Hasina Saraha, CFF’s coordinator and a graduate student. “Some weeks we have student speakers who share their current research or present on a topic of interest in the field of chemistry; at times, we have outside speakers who impart their experiences in job searching and other aspects of professional development.”



Topics change throughout the semester, and students can stay aware of upcoming speakers through an email calendar. Courses will continue throughout the fall semester, featuring a mix of student speakers and alumni. Saraha said the response to the program has been positive.

“So far, the turnout has been great and students have been participating in engaging dialogue,” she said. “It’s not always easy to have people commit to a weekly event, but the students have really shown interest in the event, which is very encouraging.”

For information on participating in or speaking at CFF, or to be placed on the email list, contact Hasina Saraha at [fa7325@wayne.edu](mailto:fa7325@wayne.edu).



# DEGREES

## AWARDED

# 2016



Dr. Pavithra Pathirathna (left) and Professor Jennifer Stockdill

### BACHELOR'S

Tolulope Akinyemi  
 Danielle Anetrini  
 Rana Aoun  
 Ahmad Aoun  
 Joshua Bauer  
 Shapnil Bhuiyan  
 Seth Boehnlein  
 Gabrielle Braceful  
 Charles Buckland  
 Devpreet Chahal  
 Quintin Cheek  
 Ian Conway  
 Lawrence Counts  
 Jessica DeLeeuw  
 George Disho  
 Ahmad El-Moussa  
 Joshua Fischer  
 James Fisher  
 Asmar Georges  
 Everett Hall  
 Nathaniel Hardin  
 Think Hoang  
 Katlyn Holt  
 Rachel Hunyadi  
 Jessica Istifan  
 Benjamin James  
 Zeinab Kanso  
 Hassan Khanzada  
 Veronica Lewalski  
 Tingxi Liu  
 Justin Macks  
 Kenneth Niezgoda  
 Ronak Patel  
 Conrad Reamer  
 Gregory Rosenhauer  
 Yahiya Saif  
 Mouhamadou Seydi  
 Adeel Siddiqui  
 Marina Tabolina  
 Michelle Talukder  
 Vishwas Tiwari  
 Harini Vijay  
 James Virga  
 Derek Volgyi  
 Daren Wamsley  
 Adalah Yahia  
 Adi Zaclli  
 Pavlina Zafirovska  
 Khadije Zahr

### MASTER'S

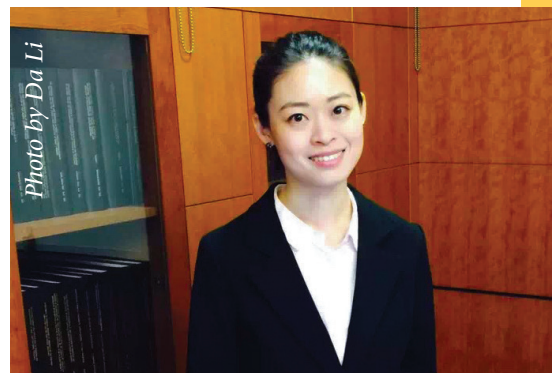
Name	Degree	Advisor
Pradip Adhikari	M.A.	Li
Heng Chen	M.S.	Stockdill
Steven Lingenfelter	M.S.	Suits
Kasun Ratnayake	M.S.	Kodanko
Chengcheng Wang	M.S.	Allen

### DOCTORATES

Name	Degree	Advisor
Chamara Abeysekera Thesis title: Chirped-pulse Fourier Transform Microwave Spectroscopy in Pulsed Uniform Supersonic Flows	Ph.D.	Suits
Calvin Austin Thesis title: Noncovalent Interactions Between Alkali Metal Cation and Aza/Thia-Crown Macrocycles: Mass Spectrometric Techniques and Theoretical Studies	Ph.D.	Rodgers/Allen
Debashis Basu Thesis title: Investigation of New Ligand Architectures Towards Proton and Water Reduction Catalysis By Cobalt Complexes	Ph.D.	Verani

## DOCTORATES *(continued)*

Name	Degree	Advisor
<b>Adam Birkholz</b> Thesis title: Development of New Algorithms for Exploring the Potential Energy Landscape of Chemical Reactions	Ph.D.	Schlegel
<b>Jean Paul Bourgault</b> Thesis title: Biological Evaluation of the Vaccine Candidate Tf-Ps A1 and a One-pot Multicomponent Coupling/Cyclization for Natural Product Herbicide (+/-)-Thaxtomin A	Ph.D.	Guo/Andreana
<b>Danielle Dremann</b> Thesis title: The Development of Peptide Ligands to Target H69	Ph.D.	Chow
<b>Nipuni Dhanesha Gamage</b> Thesis title: Synthesis, Characterization and Properties of Peroxo-based Oxygen-Rich Compounds for Potential Use as Greener High-energy Density Materials	Ph.D.	Winter
<b>Derak James</b> Thesis title: New Approaches to Chalcogenide Materials for Thermoelectrics: Lead Telluride-Based Nanostructures and Facile Synthesis of Tetrahedrite and Doped Derivatives	Ph.D.	Brock
<b>Joseph Klesko</b> Thesis title: New Chemistry for the Growth of First-row Transition Metal Films by Atomic Layer Deposition	Ph.D.	Winter
<b>Zhijin Lin</b> Thesis title: Use of 17O-NMR Spectroscopy to Study the Coordination Chemistry of Trivalent Lanthanide Ions in Solution	Ph.D.	Allen
<b>Gayani Dedduwa Mudalige</b> Thesis title: Platination Kinetics: Insight into RNA-Cisplatin Interactions as a Probe for RNA Microenvironments	Ph.D.	Chow
<b>Pavithra Pathirathna</b> Thesis title: A Novel, Ultra-fast Electrochemical Tool to Study Speciation of Trace Metals in Aqueous Solution	Ph.D.	Stockdill/Hashemi
<b>Rajgopal Sharma</b> Thesis title: Development of New Algorithms for Exploring the Potential Energy Landscape of Chemical Reactions	Ph.D.	Kodanko
<b>Ryan Thomas</b> Thesis title: On the Nature of Excited States in Ruthenium Complexes: Towards Renewable Energy	Ph.D.	Verani/Endicott
<b>Akhila Nuwan Wijerathne Kuda Wedagedara</b> Thesis title: Ln(II)-containing Cryptates: Synthesis and Properties	Ph.D.	Allen
<b>Ranran Wu</b> Thesis title: Studies Toward a Detailed Understanding of the Intrinsic Properties of Nucleic Acid Constituents: Gas Phase Conformations, Energetics, and Glycosidic Bond Stability	Ph.D.	Rodgers
<b>Yuanyuan Yang</b> Thesis title: Development of Single and Array Electrochemical Sensors for Real-time Trace Metal Analysis in Aqueous Environmental Data	Ph.D.	Stockdill/Hashemi



*Dr. Yuanyuan Yang*



*Dr. Akhila Kuda Wedagedara*



*Professor Berny Schlegel (left) and Dr. Adam Birkholz*



# Love for **CHEMISTRY**

By Lisa Anga

Sharon Kelley has been a member of the Wayne State University chemistry family since September 1965. She started as a student assistant and eventually served a long and distinguished career as the department's academic advisor for graduate students. Kelley says that she loved working with the students and "looked out for them like they were my own family. It was the best job in the world!"

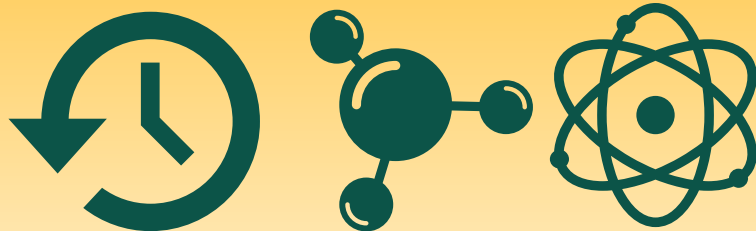
Kelley's many years of service and deep love for the Department of Chemistry inspired her to create two named scholarships. The first

is the Hugh and Mary Ann Kelly Undergraduate Endowed Research Scholarship, which honors the memory of her great-grandparents by supporting undergraduate students who are actively engaged in research. "Undergraduate research is essential to encouraging a love for chemistry early on," she said.

In addition, Kelley established the Clifford Drouillard Annual Chemistry Award in honor of her beloved uncle. The award supports students who participate in extracurricular service to the department or who exhibit outstanding research activity.

Kelley believes in the power of philanthropy and the mission of Wayne State University. She has seen the transformative power of a Wayne State education firsthand. Now retired, she hopes to be an example for faculty and former students alike.

"There is no better place to invest than in the chemistry department at Wayne State," she said. "I encourage faculty, staff and alumni to consider giving something back to the department that has given all of us so much."



## Let's work together

If you are employed by a company that does not currently interview at Wayne State University, please mention to the appropriate people that WSU has outstanding graduates. The chemistry department would be happy to arrange an interview day for your company. To arrange such an event for undergraduate or graduate students or both, please contact Matthew Allen at [mallen@chem.wayne.edu](mailto:mallen@chem.wayne.edu).



# Awards, Scholarships and Fellowships

## GRADUATE AWARDS for 2015-16

### Departmental Citations for Excellence in Teaching Service

Joseph Baumann  
Michael Cross  
Duke Debrah  
Kumuduni Tauni  
Dissanayake  
Nour El Harakeh  
Amanda Grass  
Matthew Jackson  
Travis Ness  
Michael Overbeek  
Pavithra Pathirathna  
Yuanyuan Yang

### Graduate School Citations for Excellence in Teaching

Karan Arora  
Ahmed Fouda  
Heng Chen  
Brianna Jackman  
Aparni Kithulgoda Gamage  
Timothy McMillan  
Dhanushka Munkanatta  
Godage  
Wathsala Lakmali Iwadunna  
Waduge

### Esther & Stanley Kirschner General Chemistry Teaching Award

Christine Hart

### Herbert K. Livingston Award for Excellence in Teaching

Samuel Mutinda  
Samarage Sameera Perera

### Clifford G. Drouillard Annual Chemistry Award

Ahmed Negmeldin

### Esther & Stanley Kirschner Graduate Award in Inorganic Chemistry

James Bellow  
Levi Ekanger

### Dan Trivich Memorial Award for Research in Physical Chemistry

Yunfei Lin  
Bishnu Thapa

### Biological Chemistry Graduate Student Award

Shanqiao Wei

### Norman A. LeBel Endowed Graduate Award in Organic Chemistry

Karan Arora

### James C. French Graduate Award

Ahmed Negmeldin

## GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS and FELLOWSHIPS for 2015-16

### ARC and Surendra Gupta Family Endowed Scholarship

Karan Arora

### Dr. Cal Stevens Memorial Scholarship (created by the Surendra and Karen Gupta ARC Foundation)

Ahmed Negmeldin

Girish Sati

Peng Wen

### Knoller Fellowship

Appi Reddy Mandhapati

Kusal Samarasinghe

### Schaap-Rumble Graduate Research Fellowship

Habib Baydoun

Ahmed Fouda

Lucas Hamlow

Marissa Kerrigan

Don Liyanage

Tian Shi

Supuni Thalalla Gamage

Yi-Jung Tu

Shanqiao Wei

Maryam Yousif

### Wilfried Heller Research Fellowship

Ravin Fernando

### Willard R. Lenz, Jr. Endowed Memorial Scholarship

Christine Hart

## UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS for 2015-16

### John H. Secrist Memorial Award in General

Chemistry

Mae Awada

### J. Russell Bright Award for Distinction in General Chemistry

Sahar Ajrouche

### Harold B. Cutter Memorial Award in Organic Chemistry

Mackenzie Olbrys

### Wiley Award in Advanced Organic Chemistry

Bogdan Kulikowski

Khadije Zahr

### Esther & Stanley Kirschner Undergraduate Inorganic Chemistry Award

Vishwas Tiwari

### American Chemical Society, Division of Inorganic Chemistry Award

Bogdan Kulikowski

### Merck & Company Award in Biochemistry

Gijong Paik

### David and Beverly Rorabacher Award in Quantitative Analytical Chemistry

Tingxi Liu

### American Chemical Society, Division of Analytical Chemistry Award

Rachel Hunyadi

### Wilfried Heller Award in Physical Chemistry

Joseph O'Brien

Erik Soley

### American Chemical Society, Detroit Section Award for Outstanding Chemistry Graduate

Vishwas Tiwari

## UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS for 2016-17

### Chemistry Undergraduate Scholarship

Shane Jackowski

Andrew Roberts

Aryana Sharrak

### James C. French Undergraduate Chemistry Scholarship

Aivy Dao

Klea Haxhiu

Manpreet Kaur

Erik Soley

### Jane and Frank Warchol Foundation Scholarship

Amanda Jurgelewicz

Alexandra Lemieux

Joseph O'Brien

Ramona Stamatina

### George H. Wheatley Memorial Scholarship

Marwa Abdel-Maguid

Brigid Jacob

Ibrahim Rababa

### Mary G. Wood Endowed Scholarship

Nirmeen Chouaib





The complete obituary is available at [desmondfuneralhome.com/obituary/John-P.-Oliver-Ph.D./\\_/\\_/1659772](http://desmondfuneralhome.com/obituary/John-P.-Oliver-Ph.D./_/_/1659772).

# Remembering John P. Oliver

By David M. Coleman

It is with deep sadness that we report the passing of our friend and colleague John P. Oliver, who died on Oct. 3, 2016, two weeks after complications from heart surgery.

Oliver was born in 1934 in Klamoth Falls, Oregon. He received his B.A. from the University of Oregon and his Ph.D. just three years later from the University of Washington.

Oliver began his career at Wayne State University in 1959. During his more than 51 years of service, he was a professor, mentor and researcher. He also spent many years involved in a wide variety of administrative positions, including associate dean of research and development, founding dean of the College of Science, interim dean at the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, deputy vice president for academic affairs, vice president for research, and director of the Institute for Manufacturing Research.

As a chemistry professor, Oliver's research focused on the synthesis and characterization of organometallic compounds, particularly those of the main group elements including Li, Al, Ga, In, Si, Cd and Hg. These studies included the syntheses of new materials and characterization by single-crystal X-ray diffraction and by variable temperature and multinuclear NMR spectroscopy.

Oliver built a distinguished career in research in the field of organometallic chemistry, with more than 120 publications in peer-reviewed journals and numerous chapters and scientific reviews. He was well funded by numerous federal agencies and other organizations. He mentored a large number of undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral students and visiting faculty during his career, including the direction of 38 Ph.D. students.

He was a departmental pioneer in the acquisition of major research instrumentation, including early NMRs and X-ray crystallography instruments. The passion that he

felt for modern instrumentation and its use and governance eventually morphed into the Lumigen Instrument Center (nee Central Instrument Facility).

Following retirement, Oliver was frequently in the department visiting friends and working on a comprehensive history of the Department of Chemistry. He was a constant source of gentle advice and sage wisdom to chairs, deans, vice presidents, institute directors, junior faculty and others. He was a relentless proponent of Wayne State's research enterprise and prepared carefully documented, data-driven position papers that he shared with administrators, including several presidents.

He will be greatly missed and is survived by his wife Betty of 60 years, three children (Karen, Roy and Gordon), five grandchildren (Allen, Krista, Tracy, Jennifer and Samuel), five great-grandchildren (Preston, Kaylee, Kyran, McKenzie and Natalie), and his sister, Jean Rhodes.

A celebration of life ceremony was held at the AJ Desmond & Sons Funeral Home in Royal Oak, Michigan.

The family has asked that we continue Oliver's legacy by donating to the Wayne State University Chemistry Department. Contributions to the John P. Oliver Endowed Fund can be mailed to the following address and should include the words "Dept. of Chemistry — In Memory of Dr. John Oliver" in the memo line. Checks can be made payable to Wayne State University. Mailing Address: Wayne State University Gift Processing, 5700 Cass Avenue, Suite 1200, Detroit, MI 48202.

Alternatively, consider donations to the National Audubon Society (he was an avid bird watcher).

Notes to Betty can be addressed to: Betty Oliver, 1014 Marywood Drive Royal Oak, MI 48067.



## Obituary and comments on Ronald R. Schroeder

By David M. Coleman

Ronald R. Schroeder was a valued colleague in the Department of Chemistry from 1967 until his retirement in 2004. He died on March 7, 2016,

in Tuscon, Arizona, from complications of primary progressive aphasia.

Schroeder received his B.S. in chemistry from the University of Illinois in 1961. After short industrial stints at American Oil and Chevron, he began his doctoral studies at the University of Wisconsin. He received his Ph.D. in analytical chemistry in 1967. He studied under Irving Shain and authored several seminal publications on cyclic voltammetry. That same year, he began his career at Wayne State University.

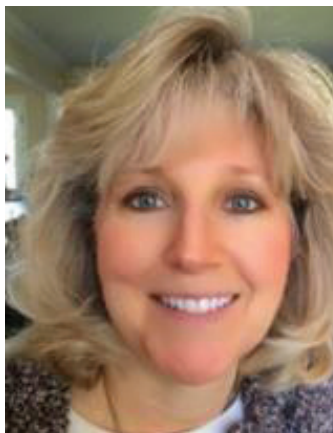
While at WSU, Schroeder served as associate department chairman, chair of the graduate studies committee and in many additional roles. He mentored approximately 20 Ph.D. students and was a popular and effective teacher of freshman chemistry, qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis, instrumental analysis and electroanalytical chemistry. Schroeder collaborated with many chemistry colleagues on all things electrochemical, resulting in many joint publications; he was considered "the electrochemical wizard."

Schroeder was also active with the local American Chemistry Society and served as governing board chair on the Federation of Analytical Chemistry and Spectroscopy Societies and president of the Association of Analytical Chemists, with which he also received a fellowship and a distinguished service award.

A resident of Ferndale and Pleasant Ridge, Michigan, Schroeder was an active participant and choir member of the Royal Oak United Methodist Church. He was also an active biker and walker, fisherman, golfer, and puzzle-solver.

Schroeder is survived by Eileen, his wife of 53 years; his children Lawrence R. Schroeder (Jennifer), Anne E. Jones (Lawrence), and Lynn K. Smith; five grandchildren; one great-grandson; and his sister, Lois Schroeder Cichantek.

His colleagues remember Schroeder as an intelligent, patient and humorous man with uncommon good sense. He was a friend to many and is truly missed.



## A Tribute to Mary Wood

By James H. Rigby

Mary Wood, supervisor of office services in the Department of Chemistry, passed away in November 2015 after battling cancer.

When Wood joined the chemistry department in 2001, her job title was

essentially "head secretary and assistant to the chair."

(Yes, we had secretaries back then!) However, being dissatisfied with the limited scope of that job, Wood quickly transformed it into something much larger. On her first day, she began the process of professionalizing the administration of the department, setting up new procedures and bringing a level of accountability to the secretarial staff that did not exist prior to her arrival. Working closely with Fran Owczarek and Debbie McCreless, Wood helped institute new and better ways for the administration to facilitate the work of the faculty. All of this was far outside of her job description, yet she embraced these challenges with enthusiasm and an upbeat, positive attitude. This is the Mary Wood that I remember best: Someone who was always looking to help out whomever and wherever she could, and doing it with a warm smile and, quite likely, a hug. It was clear to all who knew her that she cared deeply for the department, its students and everyone working here.

Nothing illustrates her approach to her job better than how she responded to the building renovation process. At the outset, I don't think she had knowledge or experience with building architecture and construction, but she took it upon herself to learn about it and become the key liaison between the department and the construction team throughout the project. The skills and experience she gained during this time allowed her once again to evolve her job into something bigger. What was so impressive was how Wood could converse with the construction team on their own terms, using their vocabulary. The building renovation project succeeded to a large degree because Wood went far beyond the call of duty and made sure that our needs were met.

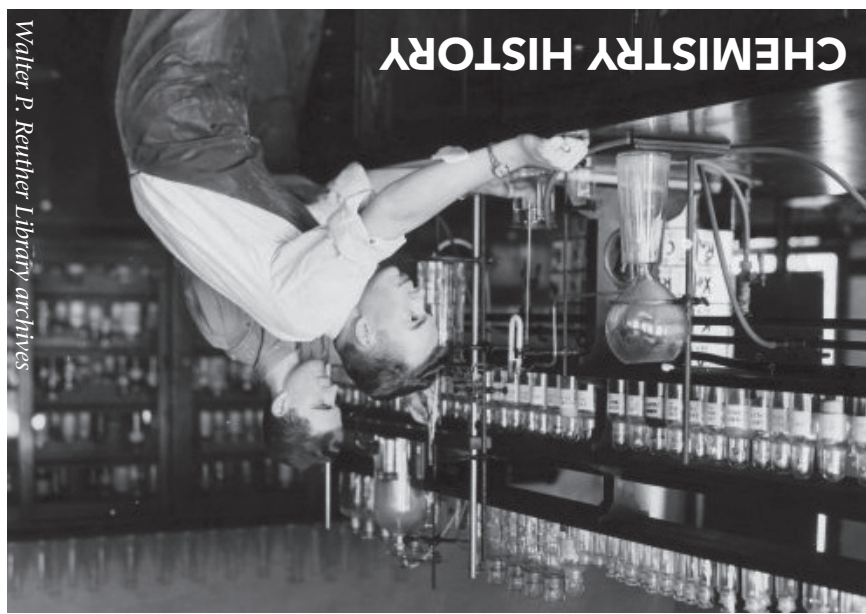
Her winning personality didn't hurt either. She pretty much had many of the workers wrapped around her little finger, but beyond that they responded so well to her because they respected her efforts to understand them and the challenges they faced.

As someone who worked so closely with her, I see a lot in the building that is Mary Wood, and I think her spirit is with us in every corner of the building. She made many lasting contributions to our department during her time with us. She was a vital part of everything she touched. She is greatly missed.



# PERIODIC TABLOID

Department of Chemistry  
5101 Cass Avenue  
Detroit, MI 48202



Walter P. Reuther Library archives

*Neil Gordon (front) and an unidentified man work in the Chemistry laboratory in Wayne University's Old Main in the 1940s. Gordon was chair of the chemistry department from 1942 to 1947. Best known for establishing the Gibson Island Conferences (later renamed the Gordon Research Conferences), Gordon started chemistry's Ph.D. program and incorporated the Frontiers seminar series, which still occurs annually at Wayne State.*

See what our department is up to!



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