A MEMORIAL
to
BRUCE VAN SCOYOC WEIDNER

Bruce V. Weidner taught chemistry at Miami University for 32 years (1947-1979) and was the department's major advocate for analytical chemistry that entire time. In addition, Bruce always had a keen interest in departmental affairs and was considered the "watchdog questioning type." His dedication to teaching analytical chemistry to both undergraduate and graduate students was consistently noted by both students and colleagues. One of the former department chairmen remarked, he is a "real help to the weaker students," but "he worries about students not learning enough." All the students "have to produce to get his grades." One of his former students, who is now a physician, recalled the time she lost her lab notebook used to record all the experimental data for the Quantitative Analysis laboratory class. Because the completed lab notebook was a major part of the grade, she came in evenings to redo the experiments with laboratory supervision by Bruce. Even just a few years before his retirement, colleagues commented that Bruce "shows excellent enthusiasm as a teacher," and he is "truly interested in the welfare of the department." He loved the irony of his nickname "SOB" (Sweet Old Bruce).

Bruce Van Scoyoc Weidner, born October 29, 1908, in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, was the son of Herman Wilhelm Weidner and Estelle Van Scoyoc. Earning all of his college degrees from Pennsylvania State College (now University), he received the B.S. (1931), M.S. (1932), and Ph.D. in inorganic chemistry (1935). His master's thesis was entitled "The Conductivity of Sulfuric Acid in Anhydrous Acetic Acid," and his doctoral dissertation involved "The Conductivity of Electrolytes in Anhydrous Acetic Acid." Dr. Weidner's early professional experiences were: chemist, Columbia Chemical Division, Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company (1930); graduate assistant in chemistry (1932-1935) and instructor in arts and science, Hazelton Undergraduate Center (1935-1937), Pennsylvania State College; instructor (1937-1939) and assistant professor of chemistry (1939-1942), University of Alaska; assistant professor of chemistry, Middlebury College (1942-1946); and associate professor, Utah State University of Agriculture and Applied Science (1946-1947). During World War II, he served in the U.S. Army Air Corps and the U.S. Air Force. After joining the chemistry faculty at Miami University, Dr. Weidner advanced from associate professor (1947-1962) to professor (1962-1979).

Among his research interests in quantitative and inorganic chemistry were conductivities, inorganic syntheses, the chemistry of polysulfides, metal alkoxides, and heats of combustion. Late in his career and into his 19 year retirement, Bruce became interested in the problem of acid rain. From 1977 to at least 1981, Bruce measured the pH with a portable meter of many hundreds of natural water and melted snow samples not only in Oxford but all over the U.S. and even the world (Europe and South America) during his travels. He reported his findings to the Ohio Academy of Science and the Ohio Department of Pollution.

Bruce Weidner actively contributed to other educational and community causes. Besides heading the analytical chemistry section of Miami's Department of Chemistry, he was one of the most active participants in the department's program of seminars. For many years Dr. Weidner conducted annual educational programs for high school teachers in the physical sciences sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF). He acted as the Associate Director in 1959 and the Director from 1960-1967 of these NSF Summer Sciences Institutes at Miami University. In 1979, after retiring and being designated professor emeritus of chemistry, he won an appointment as Visiting Scholar to Miami's Luxembourg Center for one semester. In service to the Division of Chemical Education of the American Chemical Society (ACS), he assisted with tests on Qualitative and Quantitative Exams (1945-1968). Bruce was also a co-chairman of the ACS Summer Symposium for Analytical Chemistry held at Miami University in 1973. Dr. Weidner enjoyed presenting seminars to numerous institutions and high schools in the Miami University region. As an analytical chemist, he also provided consultations (such as water analysis) for the City of Oxford and companies in the greater Oxford area. Besides teaching evening classes at Miami's off-campus Academic Center for several years, he was secretary of the student council and manager of the rifle team. Locally, he was also involved with Civil Defense and Little League baseball and served as track and swimming official. He, as well as his wife Elsa, were very active in the Oxford Presbyterian church where he served as Deacon.

In professional organizations, Dr. Weidner held memberships in the American Chemical Society (Membership Committee, 1956-1958; Student Night Committee, 1956-1957; May Meeting Committee, 1965-1966), the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Association of University Professors, the New England Association of Chemistry Teachers, and the Society for Applied Spectroscopy (president, Cincinnati Chapter). Bruce was particularly interested in the Ohio Academy of Science that he joined in 1960, becoming a Fellow in 1961, and a Life Member in 1985. His commitment to education extended to the Academy through his participation in its Visiting Scientists Program (1961-1966, 1970). Honors bestowed on him were election to Gamma Theta Phi, Phi Lambda Upsilon, and Sigma Xi.

Bruce died November 25, 1998, at the age of 90 and his wife Elsa (Ottinger) Weidner whom he married June 22, 1934, passed away soon after on June 7, 1999. They leave two children; a daughter, Gayle (Weidner) Freno of Santa Cruz, California, and a son, Scott B. Anthony (Weidner) of Evanston, WY. Shortly after Bruce's retirement, the Weidners established the Ottinger-Weidner Scholarship fund. For twenty years, at least two scholarships per year have been awarded to undergraduate and graduate students with an interest in analytical chemistry. These awards will certainly act as a lasting memorial to the Weidners and continue their long association with Miami University.

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