Percy Meldrum Mundell

Retrospective

Percy M. Mundell joined the Miami faculty in 1954 after completing his PhD at the Ohio State University in 1953 with the prominent chemist M.L. Wolfrom. His undergraduate and MS degrees were from University of British Columbia.

Percy taught organic chemistry to generations of Chemistry majors. He was a methodical thinker who expected intellectual rigor from everyone. He presented material clearly and in great detail. Students respected and admired him. They knew that completing his course successfully was an accomplishment to be proud of.

Percy was very influential during the growth of Miami during the 1960s and early 70s. He participated planning Hughes Laboratory which opened in 1970. He was also active in broader campus planning, often relating how he had unsuccessfully battled to have Bachelor Hall (1979) situated to avoid the awkward Patterson-Spring-OH 73 intersection.

As the Chemistry Department grew and developed its graduate programs, Percy provided insights and guidance to ensure rigor of the new curriculum. He continued to work with his OSU mentor and pursued natural products chemistry using osage orange as the source of several unique xanthones. He shared some of those samples with interested faculty in the 1980s; each had a neatly typed label with all details on the tiny vial.

Percy's dedication to students and the University were recognized by awards including the William Holmes McGuffey Award "for a faculty member whose impact extends far beyond the traditional parameters of education" in 1984. He and his wife Isabelle were honored as Miami Parents of the Year in 1983, an appropriate honor for the proud parents of three Miami graduates. He was recognized by the Alumni Association Honor Roll when he retired in 1987.

Percy enjoyed keeping his house and yard meticulous during his 50 years of residence in Oxford. He moved to live closer to family in 2003 and died in 2014 while residing with one of his daughters in the Chicago suburbs.

Respectfully submitted

Ann E. Hagerman