

Norman E. Williams In Remembrance

Professor Norman E. Williams, 88, died on October 24, 2016 in the Hospice Care Unit at Mercy, Hospital, Iowa City, after a long and productive life as a scientist and educator.

Norman arrived at the University of Iowa (then State University of Iowa) as an Instructor in Zoology in the Fall of 1957, after obtaining his Ph.D. at the University of California at Los Angeles with Professor Waldo H. Furgason, who had named *Tetrahymena* in 1940. On arrival, Norman was assigned to teach the two-semester General Zoology course, which we later condensed into a one-semester "Principles of Animal Biology" course. He also taught an upper-level undergraduate course in Protozoology, and participated in two graduate courses related to his research specialty. He carried out these major responsibilities with lucid and well-organized lectures that were well appreciated by the students. During his 44 years as a faculty member in the Zoology, then Biology, Department, he also supervised eleven students to completion of their Ph.D's, four terminal Master's Degree students, and in addition hosted six scientific visitors from abroad.

Norman loved his favorite single-celled organisms, mostly ciliated protozoans belonging to the genus *Tetrahymena*. He arrived at the State University of Iowa excellently versed in the structural biology of these complex unicellular organisms, and in his first decade at Iowa extended his knowledge to the ultrastructural level. During the 1970's he taught himself protein chemistry, seeking and obtaining an ever-deeper understanding of the cellular dynamics of his chosen organisms. This exploratory research continued through his formal retirement in 2001 and thereafter; toward the end of his research career he stated that his best scientific paper was a collaborative study on the cellular roles of actin, which was published in 2006, 5 years after he had supposedly transitioned into retirement.

Norman was strongly attached to the "bench", where research is actually done. Apart from being President of the Society of Protozoologists for one year, he had no interest in taking on a higher administrative position, although he did his share of committee work for the Department. He was an introvert but not a hermit: he consistently encouraged and supported his graduate students and visitors from abroad, and provided an excellent example of what it means to be a truly dedicated scientist.

Norman Williams was born in Grove City, Pennsylvania, on July 29, 1928. He was raised in Warren Ohio, where he resided until 1946. He spent two years in the U.S. Marines, after which he got his B.S. Degree at nearby Youngstown University, a Masters Degree at Brown University, and a Ph.D. at the University of California at Los Angeles. He is survived by his wife, Olivia Atcherson, and two children from previous marriages, Paula Sassano and Christopher Williams. Private inurnment took place at Oakland Cemetery in Iowa City.

(Submitted by Joseph Frankel)