

# the chemical bond

Fall 2007  
University of Florida  
Department of Chemistry

# In Memory

## Roger Bates (May 20, 1912–August 20, 2007)

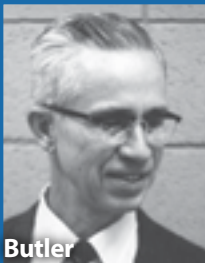
Professor Emeritus Roger Bates, 95, died in Gainesville, on August 20, 2007. Roger was born and raised on a dairy farm in Cummington, Massachusetts. Not having the aptitude for a career in farming, he received his BS degree in Chemistry from the University of Massachusetts in 1934 followed by his M.A. and Ph.D. from Duke University. He then went on to work as a Postdoc at Yale. Roger worked for thirty years as a physical chemist at the National Bureau of Standards where his specialty was the determination of pH. In 1969 Roger retired from government service and came to the University of Florida where he taught until 1979. He loved music as well as tennis. He continued to play tennis until the age of 92!



Bates

## George Butler (April 15, 1916–June 7, 2007)

Professor Emeritus George B. Butler, 91, the polymer chemist who introduced macromolecules to the University of Florida, died June 7th, 2007 in Gainesville. Born and raised in Liberty, Mississippi, he received his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. During his 61 years of service to the University of Florida, he was the inventor of cyclopolymerization and obtained one of the first outside research grants to UF. He established the Peninsular Chem Research Corporation in Gainesville with fellow UF chemist Paul Tarrant. In 1996, the polymer labs in our department were named the George and Josephine Butler Polymer Research Laboratory.



Butler

Pictured left to right: Gus Palenik, Jill Rench, Carol Drum and Dave Richardson.



## Carol Drum & the Chemistry Library

Carol Drum, the first and only chair of the Marston Science Library since 1987, retired in the summer, 2007. She came to the University of Florida in 1972, when she was hired as the head of the Chemistry Library.

The Chemistry Department recognized Carol's many contributions in October with a reception held in the Leigh Hall main office, which happens to occupy the space that held the chemistry library when Carol was "our" librarian.

The department presented Carol with a painting by local artist Virginia Chen of the northwest portion

of Leigh Hall where the library was located.

Before coming to UF, Carol earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Texas Christian University and worked in chemical laboratories for several years before joining the staff of the Celanese Corporate Library. In 1971, she returned to school to earn her master's in library science from the University of North Texas (North Texas State), graduating in 1972.

Carol is now enjoying her retirement in North Carolina, where she is close to her family.



Polfer

Fritz-Haber Institute, the stunning nature of and good conversation



Miller

He continued his career at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Steve's teaching interests include inorganic chemistry, organometallic chemistry, industrial chemistry,

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UF

# Welcome to Chemistry!

**Dr. Nicolas C. Polfer** joined our department on August 16, 2007 as an Assistant Professor working in Analytical and Physical Chemistry with interests in mass spectrometry and gas-phase spectroscopy of biomolecules. Nick received his Ph.D. in 2004 from the University of Edinburgh, with Pat Langeridge-Smith, and was a postdoctoral associate at the FOM Institute for Plasma Physics, Nieuwegein, the Netherlands and at the Max-Planck Institute for Chemistry, Berlin, Germany. In his spare time, he enjoys playing golf, watching sports, and traveling in Florida and the finer things in life, whisky, Jazz and movies.

**Dr. Stephen A. Miller** joined our department on August 16, 2007 as an Associate Professor working in Organic Chemistry and Polymer Chemistry with research interests in olefin polymerization, polymers from bio-renewable feedstocks, polymer theory, and catalysis. Steve earned his B.S. and M.S in 1994 from Stanford University and then received his Ph.D. in 2000 with John Bercaw from the California Institute of Technology. He was a postdoctoral associate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with Richard Schrock before beginning his academic position at Texas A&M University in 2001. His research interests span a number of fields, including organic chemistry, organometallic chemistry, polymer chemistry, green chemistry, and catalysis.

## a note from the chair

Every Fall semester brings change to our department, and this year we are left with some particularly big shoes to fill. December marks the official retirements of four high-profile faculty members.

**Professor David Micha** has been a member of the Quantum Theory Project and the Department of Chemistry since September 1969. David has contributed to the international reputation that QTP and the Sanibel Symposium now enjoy, particularly fostering relationships in Latin America. David's scientific interests include molecular processes and their study using methods that are solidly based on electronic structure theory. We are fortunate that David plans to continue his scholarly activities and teaching in the department for the foreseeable future.

**Professor Yngve Öhrn** began at UF in April 1961. He served as Chair of the Department of Chemistry and Director of QTP. Yngve's strong interest in sound mathematics is reflected in the rigor and precision of his research and in his teaching of Physical Chemistry, Quantum Mechanics and group theory. His book with Jan Linderberg on the theory of propagators is a classic (even if not for the faint of heart). Yngve received UF's highest academic honor, the University Teacher/Scholar of the Year Award, in 2003–2004. Yngve plans to keep on serving the department and will help us out by teaching this spring!

**Professor Martin Vala** joined the Department in late December 1967. He was the Head of the Physical Chemistry Division from 1986–1999 and Director of General Chemistry from 2001–2006.

His research has focused on electronic and vibrational spectroscopy and photochemistry, including some of the very first reports of magnetic circular and magnetic linear dichroism of matrix-isolated molecules. He and his group also obtained infrared spectra of many hydrocarbon ions and molecules of astrophysical interest. An outstanding teacher at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, Martin brought many innovations to the General Chemistry Program. He received the Florida Blue Key Distinguished Faculty Award in 2004.

**Graduate Research Professor Jim Winefordner** will retire this year concluding a distinguished and prolific career at UF that began in September 1959. Jim established the analytical chemistry program at Florida and built it into one of the best in the world while maintaining a vigorous research program in analytical spectrochemistry. He has mentored 169 Ph.D. students, 15% of the total produced in the department during his career. A special symposium honoring Jim's career will be held at Pitcon 2008, Thursday morning, March 6, in New Orleans.

I extend hearty congratulations along with sincere thanks to each. I expect that every one of us associated with the Department of Chemistry at some point over the past forty-plus years has been positively influenced by one, if not each, of these outstanding gentlemen.

—Daniel R. Talham



Micha



Öhrn



Vala



Winefordner



## 2007 Incoming Class

## 2007–2008 Graduate Student Awards

The department recognized graduate students with several awards in the past year. The Ruegamer Charitable Trust, established by William and Arlene Ruegamer, provides scholarships for students of high scholastic standing in biochemistry. The recipients for 2007–2008 were **Cory Toyota**, **Mike Napolitano** and **Prabodhika Mallidaratchy**. The Colonel Allen R. and Margaret G. Crow Endowment and the Dr. Ann R. Stasch Memorial Scholarship were again used to recognize excellence in graduate student peer-reviewed publication. This year, Crow-Stasch Publication Awards were given to **Lin Wang** (First Place), **Emine Boz**, **James Yang**, **Karen Martinez**, **Tim Garrett**, **Eric Libra** and **Magdalena Swiderska**.

The Petra Chemicals Awards for Creative Synthetic Organic Chemistry was given to **Yongjun Li**.

—Ben Smith

# keep in touch with Chemistry

We want to hear from you! Send your update to: Maribel Lisk, PO Box 117200, Gainesville, FL 32611-7200. Please include your degree (BS, MS, PhD, etc.), graduation date, and e-mail address if you have one. Photos are welcome, too! You can also e-mail your update to [chairadmin@chem.ufl.edu](mailto:chairadmin@chem.ufl.edu). To make online contributions to the department, go to <https://www.uff.ufl.edu/OnlineGiving/CLAS.asp>. Select “Chemistry 001401” and continue through the prompts.



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