



Claude Edward Wintner

April 8, 1938 - March 30, 2023

Claude Edward Wintner, 84, of Haverford, PA, died on March 30, 2023. He had suffered from peritoneal cancer for nearly ten years but was able to maintain an active life until shortly before his death. He was born on April 8, 1938, in Princeton, NJ, to Irmgard Hoelder Wintner and the well-known mathematician Aurel Wintner. He grew up in Baltimore, where he attended the public schools which he always credited with giving him an outstanding elementary and secondary education. He attended Princeton, graduating with a degree in chemistry, Summa Cum Laude, in 1959. He obtained his Ph.D. in Chemistry at Harvard in 1963, completing his thesis in organic chemistry under Robert Burns Woodward, the acknowledged leader in the field at that time.

After serving for five years as an Instructor and Assistant Professor at Yale, and another year at Swarthmore, he accepted a post at Haverford College, where he taught, carried out research, and served in a number of administrative capacities through 1995, first as Associate and then as Full Professor. During that time he also spent three sabbatical years writing and in research at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich. From 1995 through 2001 he taught a large undergraduate organic chemistry course at Harvard where, in addition to his interaction with the undergraduates, he had the opportunity to mentor and encourage the many graduate student teaching fellows who worked with him in the course to consider teaching as a

career. In 2002 he returned to Haverford as Adjunct, and then Emeritus, Professor.

He was widely acknowledged as one of the most effective communicators of organic chemistry of his era. He had a gift for explaining complex ideas in simple terms — he attributed this to his being “not a genius,” but one who had to work hard himself to understand difficult concepts — and he considered it a vocation to search for new and better ways to transmit them. His success is well encapsulated in a little story. Two graduate students were discussing the merits of their respective undergraduate organic chemistry professors, each — one from Haverford, the other from Harvard — insisting that his was the best. As it turned out, they were arguing about the same person: Claude Wintner.

At the end of his career he prepared a set of reference lectures on organic chemistry specifically for streaming video on the internet. He was well ahead of his time in envisioning and carrying out this large project in 2000-2001. These lectures still are available to all on the internet, and he considered them the summation of a life's effort to communicate the essence and the beauty of the subject he so loved.

In 1967 he married Martha Hollis Calhoun, of Swarthmore. She survives him, with their two sons, Edward Aurel (Jennifer) and Thomas Hoelder (Suzanne), and four grandchildren: Anya, Sasha, Virgil, Emily Anne. From childhood and throughout his life he spent summers with his family in a cabin in Tamworth, NH, where he maintained a large circle of friends and was active in various conservation efforts. He loved trees, and constantly was planting and caring for them, both in Haverford and in Tamworth. Another great love of his was hiking, in many places in America and abroad, but above all in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

Memorial Contributions may be made to either Haverford College LIFTFAR Program, 370 Lancaster Ave., Haverford, PA 19041 or Chocorua Lake Conservancy, PO Box 105, Chocorua, NH 03817

A campus memorial service will take place during Haverford College Alumni Weekend 2023 on Sunday, May 28, in Zubrow Commons, beginning at 11:45 a.m.

Burial will take place in Tamworth at the convenience of the family.

<https://www.haverford.edu/college-communications/news/claude-wintner-professor-emeritus-chemistry-1938-2023>

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAY 28. 11:45 AM.

Haverford College in Zubrow Commons

Tribute Wall



“ *Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Claude Edward Wintner.*



May 10, 2023 at 01:04 PM



“ *A friend and fellow chemist from many years ago, Claude was a Professor par excellence who was loved and treasured by many of his students, as well as by those who knew him. David Pratt.*

David W Pratt - April 22, 2023 at 04:03 PM



“ *Claude. Played pool and ping pong in my parents house in my sister Jiggs's orbit. As a life long chemistry teacher. I loved talking with Claude. His stance, his smile.*

Helen Steele - April 04, 2023 at 08:24 AM



“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Lynne Butler - April 01, 2023 at 09:49 AM



“ *Heavenly and Harmony* was purchased for the family of Claude Edward Wintner.



March 31, 2023 at 08:29 PM