



Torgny Daniel Gustafsson

October 18, 1946 - May 31, 2024

Torgny Daniel Gustafsson (1946-2024)

Torgny Daniel Gustafsson died on May 31, 2024 at the age of 77 of a ruptured aortic aneurysm at Lankenau Hospital. He is survived by his wife, Ingrid; their four children Marcus (Diana), Lovisa, Hanna (Jacob), and Andreas; his adored grandchildren Milo, Sebastian, Penelope, and Violet; and his siblings Bjorn, Bo, and Ingrid.

Torgny was born in Halmstad, Sweden and grew up in Kinnared and Stromstad. He studied physics and musicology at Chalmers University in Gothenburg and after earning his PhD in physics he moved to Philadelphia, PA in 1974. His two year US post-doc at The University of Pennsylvania became a permanent move when he became a faculty member in 1976, moving through the ranks from Assistant to Associate to Full Professor of Physics. He moved to Rutgers University in 1987 as Distinguished Professor of Physics and helped establish the Rutgers Laboratory for Surface Modification. During his time at Rutgers he served Chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy and later as Director of the Rutgers Laboratory for Surface Modification until 2019 when he retired as Distinguished Professor Emeritus. During his scientific career, Torgny pioneered many new experimental techniques such as photoelectron spectroscopy, ion beam spectrometry, and advance microscopies, applying them to the study of solid

surfaces, interfaces, thin films, and nanostructures. From 2010 until his death he served on the Franklin Institute's Committee on Science and the Arts. He not only loved science, but the places to which his job enabled him to travel and the people with whom he was able to collaborate.

Torgny loved anything that brought the whole family together, whether a week at the beach, a milestone birthday, or a family trip to Europe. After his retirement from his scientific career, he embarked on his second "highly successful" career as a grandfather and he'd often remark that his grandchildren were "just fantastic." Aside from his grandchildren, his greatest joys were listening to opera, traveling to new countries, and drinking bold red wine. His large personal library reflects these loves as well as his perennial curiosity and desire to expand his horizons, both metaphorical and literal.

As a child in rural Sweden Torgny would read atlases and longed to experience the many fantastic sceneries, cultures, and peoples around the planet. Luckily, his profession took him to many of the places he dreamt of going as a child, and as time passed he found new places to dream to go with the frequent flier miles he accrued. His appetite for new places and new experiences was never satisfied as he found new things to marvel at.

Upon experiencing a new city or taking in a beautiful vista, he'd often whisper "what have I done to deserve this?"--always humble about his contributions and grateful for his opportunities in life.

A Memorial Service will be held Tuesday June 25th at 11 am at Saint Paul's Lutheran Church, 415 E Athens Ave, Ardmore PA 19003, followed by a reception. The family will receive guests from 10:30 am.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Torgny's memory to the Ardmore Food Pantry, would be appreciated.

Previous Events

The family will receive guests

JUN **25**. 10:30 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
415 East Athens Avenue
Ardmore, PA

Memorial Service

JUN **25**. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
415 East Athens Avenue
Ardmore, PA

Tribute Wall

PA

“ Peter Apell lit a candle in memory of Torgny Daniel Gustafsson



Peter Apell - July 29, 2024 at 02:39 AM

TO

“ Very sorry to hear. Torgny was a great guy, both as a scientist and a person.
Thomas Osipowicz

Thomas Osipowicz - July 11, 2024 at 11:26 PM

HL

“ Hsu-chang L. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Torgny Daniel Gustafsson.

Hsu-chang L. - June 24, 2024 at 06:49 PM

DN

“ Dmitry N. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Torgny Daniel Gustafsson.

Dmitry N. - June 24, 2024 at 11:15 AM

DN

“ *Dmitry N. purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of Torgny Daniel Gustafsson.*



Dmitry N. - June 24, 2024 at 11:15 AM

DN

“ *Thirty years ago, I was a student of Torgny's at Rutgers. I can still recall the day I first walked into the Physics Department after arriving in the US. I was eager to start my studies and meet him and his lab. Before anything else, he took my wife, our little son, and me out to lunch in New Brunswick. It was a small gesture, but it meant the world to us.*

Torgny was not only a kind and gracious person, but also witty, with a great sense of humor. Every interaction with him was both fun and interesting. As I reflect on my time at Rutgers, I'll always remember him for these traits.

Dmitry Nesterov - June 24, 2024 at 11:12 AM

RD

“ *Rutgers Physics and Astronomy Department purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of Torgny Daniel Gustafsson.*



Rutgers Physics and Astronomy Department - June 22, 2024 at 08:41 PM

QJ

“ Qingtang Jiang planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Torgny Daniel Gustafsson.

Qingtang Jiang - June 19, 2024 at 10:51 AM

QJ

“ Qingtang Jiang purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Torgny Daniel Gustafsson.



Qingtang Jiang - June 19, 2024 at 10:51 AM

QJ

“ On one weekend I was showing off to my girlfriend our ion scattering equipments, Torgny came in. God knows why he was in office and walked into lab that weekend. I was very nervous but still introduced them to each other. I knew I should not take any none relevant people to our lab that is full of heavy equipments. While I was just about to apologize, Torgny took me aside and whispered: “She is beautiful”. I was immediately relaxed and even feeling great accomplishment right on the spot!

I joined Torgny’s group in 1987 when I was 24, and I am so proud to be Torgny’s first PhD graduate at Rutgers. Torgny is a great mentor, advisor and friend. He is also a father figure to me. I benefited from his way of logical thinking through all my career! Torgny came to China twice after I returned back and the last time was during the Ion Scattering Conference in China. We got together and had fun every time. I wished we could have more of these gatherings... Torgny is missed immensely!

Qingtang Jiang - June 17, 2024 at 03:13 AM

MS

I knew Torgny as a young Professor. I am so sorry to hear about his death
Margot Soven

Margot Soven - August 23, 2025 at 12:43 PM

EG

“ *I have many great memories of my fantastic uncle Torgny! I just loved his combination of being very intelligent and funny at the same time* ❤️ */nephew Elias*

Elias Gustafsson - June 10, 2024 at 06:58 PM

TF

“ *Tom and Jan Shineman and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Torgny Daniel Gustafsson.*

Tom and Jan Shineman and family - June 10, 2024 at 02:24 PM

TF

“ *Tom and Jan Shineman and family purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of Torgny Daniel Gustafsson.*



Tom and Jan Shineman and family - June 10, 2024 at 02:24 PM

HL

“ I was a student of Torgny's at Rutgers in the 90s. One scene I can still remember vividly was that, after a long group meeting that ran pretty late, Torgny smiled and jokingly said that he had to go home right away or "my wife is going to divorce me". I can still remember the care for his students (by staying so late) and the love for his wife (the tone showing the eagerness to go home in spite of the words) he conveyed at that moment.

Hsu-Chang Lu - June 08, 2024 at 08:41 PM