



Stony Brook University College of Arts and Sciences

Department of Chemistry

Newsletter, February 2019

Dear Alumni and Friends:

Greetings from the [Department of Chemistry at Stony Brook University!](#) We are pleased to send you this brief New Year update on happenings in our Department.

Warmly,
Nancy S. Goroff
Professor and Chair, Department of Chemistry



Celebrating 60 Years of Excellence



Stony Brook University
Department of
CHEMISTRY

60
1958-2018

Diamond Jubilee Celebration



Department of Chemistry 60th Anniversary!

We had an outstanding turnout for the Department of Chemistry's 60th Anniversary celebration held October 19-20, 2018. Thank you to all the alumni who joined us, especially our speakers at the Friday Chemistry Research Day, including **Stephen Heller '63, BS;** **Stephanie Sen '89, PhD;** and **Christopher Cahill '99, PhD;** and those who participated on the Saturday career panel, including **Deric Geng '02, PhD;** **Christopher Am Ende '13, PhD;** and **Amy Grant '90, BS.** It was great for our faculty to see old friends, and for our students to learn the different ways our alumni have been successful. For more photos, see [the event Flickr album](#). And, please mark your calendars for the next Chemistry Research Day and Alumni Reunion to be held October 4-5, 2019!



Robert C. Kerber

Distinguished Teaching Professor of Chemistry
1965-2010

Scientist and Educator



Synthesis and Structure of Novel Group
6 Complexes of Dibenzofulvalenes,
Organometallics, 14, 4743 (1995).

Professor Kerber's research centered on the synthesis, structure and reactions of metal-organic complexes. Among his educational innovations was the redesign of the introductory laboratory curriculum. Throughout his career, he was a student advocate and mentor.

The Chemistry Department [lost a dear friend, Distinguished Teaching Professor Emeritus Robert Kerber](#) (1938-2019) on February 5, 2019. For decades, Dr. Kerber was the face of the

undergraduate program in Chemistry, serving as Director of Undergraduate Studies for more than 25 years. He was well known for his challenging and lively classes that often focused on real-world problems. Dr. Kerber also served as President of the Arts & Sciences Senate, President of the University Senate, and President of the Faculty-Student Association. After his retirement in 2011, he served as Chair of the SBU Emeritus Faculty Association, and he was a key member of the team that put together the [Leaders in Chemistry wall](#), which of course, features a tile in his honor.



Allen Krantz
 Professor of Chemistry
 1968-1981
 Physical Organic Chemist

$\text{Cyclobutadiene} \xrightarrow{h\nu, 8\text{ K, Ar or N}_2} \text{Matrix-isolated } ^{13}\text{C} \text{ species} + ^{13}\text{CO}_2$
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Cyclobutadiene. 3. Photolysis of Matrix-isolated ^{13}C -Labeled Bicyclopentadienes, *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, **99, 4153 (1977).**

Professor Krantz studied the stereochemistry of electrocyclic reactions, but his forte was photochemical generation of highly reactive species in inert gas matrices. His trophies included the elusive cyclobutadiene and thiirene, characterized by analysis of vibrational spectra of isotopically labeled specimens.

Distinguished Professor of Chemistry Nicole Sampson; Dr. Krantz; Professor and Chair Nancy Goroff

We also sadly report [the passing of Allen Krantz](#) (1940 - 2018), a faculty member in the Department of Chemistry from 1968 to 1981. While in our department, Dr. Krantz used photochemical reactions in inert low-temperature matrices to make highly reactive species such as cyclobutadiene. After he left Stony Brook, Dr. Krantz held several high-level positions in the pharmaceutical industry, and founded Advanced Proteome Therapeutics, where he served as Chief Scientific Officer and COO. Dr. Krantz is honored with a tile on our Leaders in Chemistry Wall, and was able to join us in Spring 2017 for the official unveiling of the wall.

Student and Postdoc Updates

- **Yuning Chen PhD '18** has been chosen as a finalist for the [2019 Justin Jankunas Doctoral Dissertation Award](#) from the American Physical Society's Division of Chemical Physics for her dissertation, "Cavity-Enhanced Ultrafast Spectroscopy." Yuning worked with Professor Tom Allison. Each of the finalists will present a talk on their work at the March 2019 APS national meeting.
- **Priyanka Sharma**, postdoc in the Hsiao group, was named a finalist for the [2018 Blavatnik Regional Award for Young Scientists](#). The Blavatnik Regional Awards acknowledge and celebrate the excellence of outstanding postdoctoral scientists from institutions in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. The finalist award comes with a \$10,000 prize!
- Chemistry graduate student and Turner Fellow **Hanna Morales Hernandez** received the Outstanding Student Poster Award at the Fall 2018 ACS National Meeting in Boston. Her poster, "Isolation and Characterization of Gold Nanoparticle Surface Stabilizing Species," describes her research with Professor Chris Johnson on new information-rich laser spectroscopy techniques to develop precise molecular design rules for engineering functional nanometer-scale devices.

Faculty and Staff Updates

- **Iwao Ojima** earned the [2019 Ernest Guenther Award in the Chemistry of Natural Products](#), his fourth national ACS award. Professor Ojima, the director of the Institute for Chemical Biology and Drug Discovery, was recognized for "exploration of the full potential of taxane-class diterpenes at the interface of natural product chemistry, synthetic methodology, medicinal chemistry, chemical biology and medicine."
- **Ken Dill** won the American Physical Society's [2019 Max Delbrück Prize in Biological Physics](#). Professor Dill, director of the Laufer Center for Computational Biology, was recognized for independent contributions to a new view of protein folding, from the

introduction and exploration of simple models, to detailed confrontations between theory and experiment.

- **Trevor Sears** was named a [2018 Fellow](#) of the American Physical Society.
- **Robert Grubbs** and **Esther Takeuchi** were each named a [Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science](#).
- **Surita Bhatia** was among 10 women recognized for Outstanding Contributions to Chemical Engineering at the 2018 AIChE National Meeting, in celebration of the AIChE Women's Initiatives Committee 20th Anniversary.
- **Nicole Sampson** was named SUNY Distinguished Professor.
- We welcomed two new lecturers, **Maria Nagan** and **Sajjad Hossain**, to the Department of Chemistry this past fall. We also said goodbye to longtime Organic Lab Coordinator **Rong Chen**, who moved to Washington University in St. Louis.
- Last summer, we said goodbye to two longtime staff members, **Heidi Ciolfi** and **Charmine Yapchin**. We wish them both well in their new positions at the Simons Center for Geometry and Physics and the Institute for Mathematical Study, respectively. We are thrilled to welcome our new business manager, **Alyssa Tuthill**, who came to us from the Department of Biomedical Engineering.

SBU Chemistry in the News

- TargaGenix, a start-up company that has licensed **Iwao Ojima's** taxoid anti-cancer drug SBT-1214 and derivatives, [received the first Long Island seed grant](#) through the Accelerate New York Seed Fund, for the development of Professor Ojima's compounds.
- The roadway leading to the new Medical and Research Translation (MART) Building [has officially been named Lauterbur Drive](#) in honor of late chemistry professor and Nobel Laureate **Paul Lauterbur**. In addition, at a September 5, 2018, ceremony, Professor Lauterbur's ground-breaking work to invent magnetic resonance imaging was recognized as an Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Historical Milestone.

We Appreciate Your Support!

Resources for faculty and students help support and strengthen the educational experience. The Department of Chemistry depends on our alumni and friends to build and improve our research infrastructure through support of instrumentation, graduate fellowships, and building new laboratories.

Your generosity, whether it's the renewal of your support or the decision to give for the first time, allows us to do what we do best – innovative, creative research and teaching that's the hallmark of a great public research university. I hope you'll consider investing in our students and faculty by making a [gift](#) today or speaking with the College's advancement representative, Assistant Dean Rebecca Bair, rebecca.bair@stonybrook.edu, or 631.632.6178.

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