



A. Wallace Cordes

JUN 29, 1934 - JAN 25, 2014



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A. Wallace Cordes

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A Wallace (Wally) Cordes, 79, of Fayetteville, Ark., passed away Saturday, January 25, 2014. He was born on June 29, 1934 in Freeport, Ill. to Arthur R. and Evelyn Vehmeier Cordes.

He graduated from Freeport High School and attended Elmhurst College. He received a bachelor's degree in chemistry and math from Northern Illinois University in 1956 and his master's and doctorate degrees in inorganic chemistry at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign in 1958 and 1960, respectively. He joined the Department of Chemistry at the University of Arkansas in 1959 and served on the faculty for over forty years, working in the area of X-ray crystallography in inorganic chemistry. During his tenure, he was recognized as University Professor and served as the department chairman and the chair of the Faculty Senate.

Dr. Cordes had an infectious enthusiasm for teaching and working with students and faculty alike. He received numerous awards for his teaching, including the Arkansas Alumni Association Faculty Award for Teaching and Research, the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences Master Teacher Award, the Burlington Award for Teaching, the C.A.S.E. Arkansas Professor of the Year, the Carnegie Foundation Arkansas Professor of the Year, and the Innovative Excellence in Teaching Award from the International Conference on Teaching and Learning. He was a charter member and past president of the Teaching Academy and was co-founder and two-time director of the Teaching and Faculty Support Center, renamed in his honor as "The Wally Cordes Center for Teaching and Faculty Support" in 2002.

Dr. Cordes' research career included the publication of over two hundred papers and the direction of numerous graduate students. His research led him to international meetings and sabbaticals. He served as Chair of the Small Molecule Division of the American Crystallography Association and on the Editorial Board for the Journal of Chemical Crystallography.

He was a lifetime member of the Ozark Society, serving as its president for several years. As an Eagle Scout and later a Boy Scout leader, he enjoyed camping, hiking and canoeing in the Ozarks.



Obituary

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He attended Central United Methodist /Church in Fayetteville.

He is survived by his wife of fifty-seven years, Doris Kaiser Cordes, originally from Cedarville, Ill.; their four children, David Cordes of Tuscaloosa, Ala., his wife Susan and their children Jennifer Cordes Haynes and Katherine Cordes, Janet Cordes Jones of Flower Mound, Texas, her husband Shaun and their children Bryce and Megan Jones, Karen Cordes Spence, of Springfield, Mo., her husband Rod and their children Sarah and Lauren Spence, and Roger Cordes of Houston, Texas, his wife Laurrie and their children Lance and Caroline Cordes; his sister, Sherry Fransioli of Hendersonville, N.C.; and his brother-in-law Dale Kaiser of Greenwood, Ind.

A private family service is planned.

Remembrances and condolences can left online at www.nelsonberna.com

Memorials may be made to the A.W. Cordes Chemistry Fund, which provides teaching awards to graduate students in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Arkansas.



Tribute Wall

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PP

Peter Pulay posted:

Wally, and his wife Doris, were really great. They helped us a lot when we first arrived in Fayetteville (in 1982 - 33 years ago). Wally did not have a negative streak in him. He was always helpful, unselfish. I think that the students sensed this. He got always very high marks in student evaluations. He was also very handy, and could build things. Some of his teaching aids/demonstrations are still in use. His mobiles were legendary, almost up to Caldwell. We miss Wally, and will be missing him but life has to go on.

February 21 at 7:00 PM

SB

Shelly Burnside posted:

I have very fond memories of Dr. Cordes. He showed up for my first day of Chem 101 in a tux -- after his son's wedding. Who can top that impression? He was an excellent mentor and advisor. Of all of the excellent professors I had at the University of Arkansas, he stands out as the most inspiring -- yet also the most personable. His memory lives on in the lives of all of his students... He is unreplaceable.

February 17 at 7:00 PM

CC

Carolyn Crook posted:

Dr. Cordes was an inspiration to all who had any contact with him. As a post-doc in biochemistry/chemistry--it was always fun to hear what he had done to enliven the class and to get non-scientific students to enjoy chemistry and to understand how it was involved in their entire lives. He will be missed but his legacy lives on in the many people he touched. Carolyn Crook and Scott Crook

March 13 at 7:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

Doris and family, Wally was one of a kind. I finally followed his career advice and started teaching. It was sage advice. Cindy and I so appreciated all that you did for us while I was a grad student in Wally's group. Those were some of the best times. He will be missed by all. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you. Willis and Cindy Weigand Contact Me

February 26 at 7:00 PM



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MB

Morris Bramlett posted:

I began graduate school in 1985. I strongly considered working for Dr. Cordes, but chose another path. Even though I went a different direction with research, he was always an inspiration to me as a teacher. Many of the things I do today in the classroom are a reflection of what I learned from Dr. Cordes. I still consider my two Cordes Awards for Outstanding Teaching Assistant some of my greatest accomplishments. He will always be fondly remembered.

February 25 at 7:00 PM

JS

John Shore posted:

When I started my graduate studies I was not entirely sure of my life's direction. I was lucky enough to have Dr. Cordes as my major professor. He mentored me in both chemistry and life and has been an inspiration to me throughout my career. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him. My condolences to all in this difficult time.

February 16 at 7:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

~ George Knight

February 14 at 7:00 PM

BW

Bi-Cheng (B.C.) Wang posted:

I came to UA in 1963. Wally picked me up at the Greyhound bus station with his old model-T. Ever since that day, Wally has impacted my whole life. I have so many fond memories of being a graduate student in his lab. Beside inorganic chemistry, he inspired me in the practice of to do-it-yourself as a standard life-style for most homeowners in the country. He gave me my first lesson in playing golf that made many bare spots on his beautiful lawn. He and Dorothy hosted the rehearsal dinner for our wedding. Johnna and I were so sorry to hear of the passing of Wally. He will be greatly missed.

February 4 at 7:00 PM



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AW

Alan Wray posted:

Prof. Cordes was my freshman chemistry instructor in 1965, and I found him to be a teacher of great insight, humor, and skill. He would frequently tie chemistry to "ordinary" life in unexpected ways by using highly personal and entertaining anecdotes. I still remember his mnemonic for remembering an electrochemical rule: "I don't like cats, so I want to reduce the number of cats; therefore reduction takes place at the cathode." His ease and talent in teaching arises in the professorial ranks all too rarely, and I have no doubt that every former student will mourn his loss.

February 2 at 7:00 PM

BL

Bettie Lu Lancaster posted:

~ Bettie Lu Lancaster, Fayetteville, Arkansas

February 1 at 7:00 PM

KC

Kathy Comfort posted:

I met Wally when I first came to the UA in 2001 and I often saw him at the TFSC luncheons and teaching camps and he was always the best part of the events. He was such an incredibly kind man who genuinely loved teaching. I learned so much from him and he continues to be an inspiration to me. He had an immensely positive impact on students and faculty alike.

February 1 at 7:00 PM

SY

Song Yang posted:

Back in 2004, I attended teaching academy at UA and met Cordes. He immediately strikes me with his passion about teaching. I wish I can accomplish what he has done for his students. However, like good researcher, good teacher is hard to come by! My condolences for Corde's family and for UA for losing such great person with such great passions for what he has been doing!

January 31 at 7:00 PM

CR

Cathy Roe posted:

I will always fondly remember the 18 years I knew Wally. Working with him at the TFSC & the Teaching Academy will always be wonderful memories. He will always be thought of and remembered as a very 'special' and devoted person indeed.

January 30 at 7:00 PM



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RC

Ruth Collier posted:

Doris and Family, I am so sorry for your loss.

January 30 at 7:00 PM

DJ

Donna Johnson posted:

To the Cordes family: My deepest sympathy to you all. I had the privilege to work in the CHBC Library for several years and benefit from the presence of Dr. Cordes. He was one of those rare individuals who could make anything fun. He was thoughtful and caring to staff members, never above stepping in to set up shelves or carry some books. When something needed to be done and protocol was hazy, he always said, "It's easier to beg forgiveness than to ask permission sometimes." Then he'd get it done, even when it wasn't his job to do it. He cared for the department and all aspects of its operation. He made a difference in lives the way most of us can only dream of. My best to you.

January 30 at 7:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

I remember Wally as an interesting and devoted Boy Scout leader for our son John Stephens' troop. We appreciate his character and his service. Wanda & Lloyd Stephens

January 30 at 7:00 PM

NM

Nancy McCartney posted:

~ Nancy McCartney, Fayetteville, Arkansas

January 30 at 7:00 PM

NM

Nancy McCartney posted:

So sorry. You were always such good neighbors. And thanks for his work with the Ozark Society.

January 30 at 7:00 PM



GF

Gene Fry posted:

Sorry to hear about Wally. He was, by all accounts, a great teacher. He helped host me when I gave a Fry lecture at Fayetteville, and I remember him showing me a Calder mobile in the fine arts building. We both admired it. He was an infectious guy, an original. We are poorer with him gone. Brian Fry (son of Art Fry)----- I remember having wonderful times playing at Wally's house when we in grade school. Games he built beanbag toss, what is now called table soccer, other stuff. He always seemed happy, full of energy. Gene Fry (son of Art Fry)-----
-----Thanks so much for letting me know. Prof. Cordes was a teacher of great insight, humor, and skill. I still remember his mnemonic for remembering an electrochemical rule: "I don't like cats, so I want to reduce the number of cats, therefore reduction takes place at the CATHode." Alan Wray (U of A '69)-----I remember Wally Cordes really well; he was my first (and most interesting) chemistry teacher when I started college. He had so much energy; just bounced around all over the stage of this big auditorium class. He was an amazing teacher; I'm sorry to hear of his passing. Please give my condolences and my appreciation of him to his family. Laura Skillern Morrison (U of A '69)-----I never took a class from Dr. Cordes, but I knew him some from my years at Scientific Supplies in the basement of the chemistry building. Also, Don Allen rented a house from him for a while. I remember him as active and fun-loving, humorous as well as intelligent. We talked a little about canoeing once or twice, I think I was walking across campus once and came upon him and Dr. Johnson (who I did have for one semester in general chemistry). They were standing close together on the sidewalk earnestly discussing something of great apparent interest as their eyes were riveted on something up in the sky behind me and others on the sidewalk. My intuition immediately warned me that they were just trying to lure us to turn and look up into the sky behind us. I successfully resisted the strong reflexive urge to do just that. I broke into a grin as I passed them, and just the smallest hint of a smile on their faces in return confirmed my suspicion. They didn't break character or move their gaze. I thought it was so funny and cool that two chemistry professors would be out punking folks that way. Good natured fun. I was glad to see him at your dad's memorial service, but I didn't know him well enough to visit with him after all those years gone by. Thanks for letting us know. I hate the inexorable drip, drip, drip of loss as the grownups of our youth depart this life one after another. It makes the world feel so different to me. The facts of our mortality aren't news to us, but still hard to accept sometimes. Rick Jefferson (U of A '72)-----
-----There are so many memories of the good times we had working together -- not only with gen chem but also in getting him started with x-ray crystallography. We worked with cabinet-maker Leonard Gabbard, the sign painter, and the electrician to get the periodic chart installed overhead in the lecture room. He insisted we put no symbols on the switches in the control panel -- after all, shouldn't chem faculty know it without a crib? Now the thing is gone, I'm told. We both thought we could keep Zimmerman awake up there in the back row of that large class, but he topped all when he came in one morning in a tux -- and again when he kicked off a new semester coming in with a mop, pail, and apron, making them think the janitor would just fill in until the tardy prof arrived. We were using the Weissenburg camera for early x-ray work, but his program in synthesis really took off when he got the computerized diffractometer. When he came, he'd completed his work at Illinois after the war with its strong inorganic program -- Therald Moeller's book had just come out. Ancient history! He symbolized and realized the best of being a teacher and researcher -- and a warm, cre



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GF

January 26 at 7:00 PM

GJ

Gerald Jordan posted:

Wally was a treasure.I met him at the teaching academy during my first year at the university and I was absolutely dazzled. His enthusiasm for teaching was infectious. His love for students was instructive for all beginning teachers.A "Wally" comes along once in a generation.

January 30 at 7:00 PM

JN

Jean Neuberger posted:

As a freshman in 1964, I had Chemistry under Dr. Cordes. I think back on him as an outstanding instructor and a caring, upbeat person to be around. His positive effect on students can never be adequately measured. However, one can be certain that thousands are fondly thinking of him and that's a great legacy. Condolences to his family.

January 30 at 7:00 PM

DS

David Stefferud posted:

Among the many things Wally did to help students was to memorize everyone's name and act as pastor at the end of a lecture. About two years later (and not having seen him in the interim) I attended a class with a friend and sat in the fifth row -- and within two minutes he recognized me as a former student and introduced me to the class, by name. He was an amazing teacher and will be missed.

January 30 at 7:00 PM

GB

Gerry Briggs posted:

Hi Doris-It was with sadness that the news of Wally's death reached me. He was one of the good guys in our class of '52. We have lost other good ones-Wally was one of the best. Please accept my sympathies.

January 30 at 7:00 PM



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RR

Rick And Janet Roessler posted:

Dear Doris and Cordes family, Janet and I are thinking of all of you during these difficult times. Wally was a model for us all, both as a person and a professional. It goes without saying that UA never knew a better instructor and faculty member. I remember calling him during one of his early hospital stays and asking him what he was up to. He told me that he was walking the halls practicing all of his intro to chemistry lectures -- as if he ever needed practice. Wally's legacy continues on in the hearts and minds of his many students and friends.

January 29 at 7:00 PM

LK

Lou (Schlegel) Kubatzke posted:

My deepest sympathy to the Cordes family. I grew up with Sherry, spending lots of time at the Cordes home. I didn't really know Wally, but Sherry and her parents spoke very proudly of him, and, I almost felt like I knew him also. I hope God guides you through this difficult time and brings you comfort and peace.

January 29 at 7:00 PM

DD

Dick And Bert Dildine posted:

To Dorris and Family, We were saddened to hear of the passing of our friend Wallie. So many years, and such fun memories. School years, and visits later. Our prayers and thoughts are with you.

January 28 at 7:00 PM

LD

Lee Daniels posted:

I met Wally later in his career, having wandered into a Chemistry talk he gave at another university. I was instantly drawn to this passionate, caring individual who captivated an entire audience that day. A few years later I was honored to be invited to his home while I was visiting Fayetteville, and I cherish those memories of being in the presence of someone who made everyone's day a little brighter whenever he was there! Wally's home-built models, used to make complex crystallographic concepts seem simple, could be the basis for teaching crystallography worldwide; I hope that someone has preserved these amazing creations.

January 27 at 7:00 PM



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CK

Connie Hendrix-Kral posted:

Doris, Tim and I want to extend our sympathies to you and your entire family. For Tim, Wally was a great mentor who certainly influenced Tim's teaching style and philosophy. For myself, our anniversary will forever be linked with both of you. You for introducing me to a young professor named Tim Kral at the Mortar Board banquet. Wally, for his wonderful sense of humor that night and somehow managing to send several pieces of German chocolate cake to me through campus mail. Someone once said that our children are the messengers to those we will never meet. In Wally's case, his love of teaching will be his legacy as numerous teachers and professors convey his philosophy and values. Tim Kral and Connie Hendrix-Kral

January 27 at 7:00 PM

MS

Mary Jo & Bill Schneider posted:

How we admired Wally--his sly sense of humor, his ability to engage and inspire each student in his large classes. Somehow Wally made chemistry fun and accessible. Wally was a stalwart of the University community and an example to all of us. How Wally could learn the names of all of his students by the end of the first week shows what a magician we knew. Our condolences.

January 27 at 7:00 PM

MB

Marilyn Bradley posted:

As a former student, Dr. Cordes was a great teacher and he had a wonderful sense of humor. I enjoyed all of his classes.

January 27 at 7:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

True greatness is measured by the impact a person has on those around him. Wally was among the greatest men I have ever known--he impacted the lives of so many young people at a crucial time in their lives. As a teacher in chemical engineering, most of my students were also students of Wally. They were unanimous in their praise of Dr. Cordes as one who cared deeply for each student, and who helped them to reach their potential as students and beyond in life. jim turpin

January 27 at 7:00 PM



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PP

Peter And Agnes Pulay posted:

Wally was probably the most unselfish, sincere person we have known. He and Doris were our first neighbors in Fayetteville, always welcoming and ready to help. Wally was a teacher's teacher, and every former student I met had a fond memory of him. He loved and understood chemistry, and tried to instill his enthusiasm in his students. He was also very handy, building great chemistry models which are still in use, and creating mobiles in the Caldwell style which I would present to visitors as "genuine priceless Cordes mobiles". He loved the outdoors and riding a jeep. We lost a good and fun man with his departure. Our deepest sympathies are to Doris and his family.

January 26 at 7:00 PM

LD

Larry Davenport posted:

As a new freshman at the University of Arkansas in January 1961, it was such pleasure to have a "freshman chemistry" course taught by Dr. Cordes. He seemed to truly enjoy teaching and unlike most professors, he was quite a home with undergraduates. I came back to the University as an adjunct professor in the fall of 2003 and who was there to give the new faculty a perspective on teaching but Dr. Cordes. No one was better. I remember him fondly and will miss him. Janet my best to you and my condolences on your loss.

January 26 at 7:00 PM

GJ

Gracie Johnson posted:

To the Cordes family, I just wanted to tell you that I really enjoyed the time I spent around Mr. Cordes back in the day. He was such a fun person, with such a great, witty sense of humor. He made the world a better place and will be missed. My thoughts and prayers are with you all at this time.
Sincerely, Gracie Keegan Johnson

January 26 at 7:00 PM

MO

Marilyn Olmstead posted:

Wally's space group models were wonderful and will forever remind us of his teaching genius.

January 26 at 7:00 PM



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JC

Jan Condren posted:

In the summer of 1980, I accompanied my husband as he studied with Wally. He was kind and caring. I will share two memories. Mike was studying with Wally's grad students. When Doris introduced him to their children as "Mr. Condren," Wally was quick to correct her. Second, our anniversary came up during that summer. We were young marrieds; Wally was supporting four kids. At some sort of faculty event, we reported that we had gone to the Old Post Office for our anniversary dinner. We had spent all of thirty-five dollars. I'll never forget Wally laughingly figuring out how many Big Macs that would have been. It was a wonderful summer. Doris, I hope you know how deep and wide Wally's influence was. He made a strong impression on so many. Thank you for sharing him with us.

January 26 at 7:00 PM

DJ

Dale Johnson posted:

Wally was dedicated to teaching and would go any lengths to help students understand and hopefully love Chemistry as much as he did. He loved working in the lab with his students and encouraging them to be independent thinkers. He was particularly good at constructing visual aids to illustrate difficult ideas like the spatial relationship between molecules in different classes of crystals. Some of his constructions are visually stimulating even if you have no idea of their function. It is not surprising that he loved M. C. Escher and that his lab was decorated with a mobile in the style of Alexander Calder. Beyond his teaching and research he had a great love of the outdoors. He was an instigator in an annual Chem Department canoe float on the Buffalo or Kings River after Spring finals. He organized frequent golf days for the inorganic chemistry faculty and students that he called "de-turfing" events. He liked Monty Python and would answer his telephone with the greeting "Jot-em-down Store in the style of the comedy radio duo Lum and Abner. He read avidly, particularly Donald Westlake books. He had a world class collection of ballcaps, often advertising farm machinery or various hybrid corn varieties (possibly in honor of his Illinois upbringing). Some of the Staff in the Chem Dept honored "Wally Cordes Hat Day" each year on his birthday by wearing a cap to work, which says a lot about how they felt about him. He just made the world a little more fun. I will miss him greatly and I know you will too!

January 26 at 7:00 PM

ZA

Zoraida Aguilar posted:

I am so sad to hear this. He was an academic guardian for me. I came for a PhD in Chemistry in the fall of 1998. I was late for a couple of weeks because of visa changes and when I finally made it to class, Dr. Wally Cordes informed me that my students were not left behind because he had taken care of them. He also made sure that other graduate students were attending to my students during my absence. He made life as a foreign graduate student easy while I had to do the run around for all the paper work that I had to attend to. He made my life as a student fun and unforgettable.

January 26 at 7:00 PM



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BD

Bill Deese posted:

My first semester in grad school in 1976 I was in Dr. Cordes' inorganic class. At the time I had no direction or real goals for grad school. His teaching and personality was by far the highlight of that semester. Eventually, I changed into inorganic for my Ph.D. studies. He was one of my favorite mentors. Condolences to all of you in this difficult time.

January 26 at 7:00 PM

MC

Mike Condren posted:

I was a BS chem major in the early 1960s. His classes in inorganic led to my PhD in inorganic. I worked with him in the summers of 1980 & 1981. His recommendation led to my 28 years at Christian Brothers University in Memphis. My sabbatical in 1988 led my later collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Madison and 2 sabbaticals there.

January 26 at 7:00 PM

RD

Robert C. Tisdale, Ph.D. posted:

I studied inorganic chemistry under Professor Cordes as a chemistry major at UA in the late 1970s. His influence led me to pursue a PhD in this field. The leadership and vision he embodied was critical in molding the Department of Chemistry into a world class research institution ... and in leading young scientists to advance the profession for the benefit of humanity. He will be missed.

January 26 at 7:00 PM

PS

Paul Swebston posted:

Hearing of Wally's passing was like hearing of my parents' passing. He was an incredible influence on my adult life.

January 26 at 7:00 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring A. by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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