

Published in Starkville (MS) Daily News on Dec. 6, 2016

Mr. Howard Chambers(1939 - 2016)

Howard Chambers was born December 27, 1939, in Buda, TX, and passed away December 3, 2016, at North Mississippi Medical Center, Tupelo, following a short illness. He received B.S. and M.S. degrees from Texas A&M University and a PhD from the University of California at Berkeley, all in Entomology. It was in Berkeley that he met his future wife, Jan. He spent his entire academic career of 48 years at Mississippi State University where he was a Professor in the Department of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, Entomology, and Plant Pathology, and where he established a research program in insecticide toxicology.

Howard was predeceased by his parents, Thelma and Frank Chambers; and brother, William. He is survived by his wife, Janice; two daughters, (his "princesses") Kristen Funck (and husband Edward) of Harrisonburg, VA, and Cheryl Chambers (and husband Doug Bedsaul) of Starkville, MS; and granddaughter Elise Chambers Funck. He is also survived by his sister, Nelda White of Austin, TX; brother, Robert Chambers of Austin, TX; sister-in-law, Annette Chambers of Buda, TX; and a number of nieces and nephews. Howard idolized the three women in his life and treated them royally; he did not have a chance to spoil baby Elise.

Howard was a brilliant scientist, a toxicologist, who was a self-declared "shade tree" chemist. He was loved as a teacher and admired as a researcher who creatively synthesized numerous chemicals including a variety of toxic insecticidal and nerve agent analogues, as well as a number of potential antidotes for these. These antidotes have the potential to save lives and brain function of people who might be attacked with chemical weapons. He invented these antidotal chemicals, has a patent on them, and was very excited about their potential as countermeasures. Their continued development will be pursued by his research colleagues and students. He particularly valued his long-term research collaboration with Jan. He thoroughly enjoyed his job and looked forward to work each day. He felt that he was more fortunate than most and could not have had a better job than one where he could "play in the lab" every day and get paid for it.

Howard loved the Great Smoky Mountains and the family vacationed there every summer. He looked forward to the peaceful walks and mountain streams.

He was a member of Starkville First United Methodist Church and a participant in the Inquirers' Sunday School class whose discussions he thoroughly enjoyed and whose members he valued as friends.

Howard enjoyed life and was light-hearted. He didn't take himself too seriously, elevated sarcasm to a new art form, and enjoyed making people giggle, especially all his Facebook friends, with his observations on life and the world, and with general silliness. He had a down-to-earth outlook on life and disdained meetings and other academic activities that he viewed as a waste of time. He loved his lab and wanted to work in the lab until the end, which he did. He was loved by everyone who interacted with him. He felt he didn't need to worry about his health until he knew he had something worth worrying about, so he was not worrying too much about impending health problems. He said very recently that if these issues were serious, "It's been fun", and that phrase characterizes very well his outlook on his life.

He has left a legacy of an outstanding research program that may contribute to saving peoples' lives, a reputation of excellent teaching through which he educated undergraduate and graduate students and taught them to think, a perfect marriage of 47 years with no more than one argument ever, two loving and accomplished daughters of whom is very proud, and a baby granddaughter who has much to learn from his legacy. He will be missed.

Visitation will be on Wednesday, December 7, 2016, 5-7pm, at Welch Funeral Home, Starkville, MS, and on Thursday, December 8, 2016, for the hour preceding the funeral service that starts at 11 am at Starkville First United Methodist Church. Burial will follow with a graveside service at Memorial Gardens Park, Starkville, MS.

Donations to his favorite charities are requested: MSU Wesley Foundation, P.O. Box MY, Mississippi State, MS 39762; Friends of the Smokies, P.O. Box 1660, Kodak, TN 37764 (www.FriendsOfTheSmokies.org); or , 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105 (www.StJude.org).

You can go online and leave the family a condolence at: www.welchfuneralhomes.com.

Funeral Home

Welch Funeral Home

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