

Samuel R. Scholes Jr. dies; memorial June 16

5/28/12

We regret to inform you of the death of Samuel R. Scholes Jr., professor emeritus of chemistry at Alfred University, on Thursday, May 24, 2012. Dr. Scholes would have celebrated his 97th birthday on June 5. Sam lived independently in Alfred until the end of his life, active in the Union University Church and golfing at Wellsville Country Club well into his 90s. There will be a memorial service at the Union University Church, Alfred, at 3 p.m., Saturday, June 16, 2012. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, memorial contributions be made to the community charity of each donor's choice. Sam is survived by his daughter Susan Schools, brother James Scholes, grandchildren Sean McClure and Tara McClure Domican, and three great grandchildren. He was predeceased by his wife, Doris, daughter Jean Ann Scholes, brother Addison Scholes, and sister Ann Scholes Colvin. Born in 1915 in Pittsburgh, PA, he was the oldest of four children of Samuel R. and Lois Boren Scholes. He married the late Doris Hann, a 1937 alumna of Alfred University, on Oct. 28, 1944, in Alfred. She was a high school English teacher prior to their marriage. She was a secretary in the Admissions Office from 1962 until her retirement in 1980. Friends recall that she suffered a major stroke in 1985. For more than seven years until her death Oct. 5, 1993, Sam drove to the nursing home in Wellsville every day to be with her. A beloved member of the Alfred University faculty for 35 years until his retirement in 1980, Sam Scholes Jr. arrived in Alfred in 1932 when his father Samuel R. Scholes Sr. was hired by the College of Ceramics to establish a program in glass science engineering. Sam Jr. was graduated from Alfred University with a degree in chemistry in 1937. Following in his father's footsteps, he earned a degree in physical chemistry from Yale University in 1940. He taught at Tufts University for five years before returning to Alfred University in 1946 as an associate professor of general chemistry. He was promoted to full professor in 1958. He served as chair of the chemistry department for 15 years. In the citation presented to him when he was granted emeritus status upon his retirement in 1980, it was noted "Through his earnest, conscientious teaching, he has introduced thousands of undergraduates into the mysteries, joys and satisfactions of the discipline around which he has centered his professional life." He is credited with developing a chemistry faculty "devoted to the teaching of chemistry and to the University." His "foresight and careful planning" led to the "development and sustaining of a chemistry program that has continued to thrive." Scholes taught general chemistry to all majors, physical chemistry and analytical chemistry to science majors and engineering students, and organic chemistry to nursing students. "When alumni remember the Alfred University faculty who were more than their professors, who were their mentors and their friends, more often than not, they talk about Sam Scholes Jr.," said Alfred University President Charles M. Edmondson. "A professor of chemistry at the University for 35 years, Sam influenced the lives of thousands of AU alumni. He truly embodied the essence of what we like to think is at the heart of the Alfred experience - knowledgeable, caring faculty members. Sam even influenced the people he met after his retirement. I have rarely met anyone with so much ability to see the good in people and to take joy from life." The late Dr. Joshua Fierer, a 1959 alumnus of Alfred University, in 1999 created the Samuel R. Scholes Jr. Lecture in Chemistry in honor of his "friend and mentor." Dr. Fierer recalled evenings spent with Sam and Doris Scholes as some of his best memories of Alfred. In recognition of his continued loyalty to his alma mater, in 2005 Scholes was awarded the Lillian T. Nevins Award for Lifetime Service to Alfred University. In addition to his service to the University, Scholes served as an Alfred Village trustee for 14 years, deputy mayor and life member of the A.E. Crandall Hook and Ladder Co., and was chief of the department 1955-57. A more than 60-year member of the American Chemical Society (ACS), Scholes served as the second chair of the Corning section of the ACS in 1954 and in November 2003 he was one of four charter members of the section who helped celebrate the section's 50th birthday.