

Dr. Gaylord Rough, professor emeritus of biology, dies

3/14/07

We are saddened by the death of Dr. Gaylord Rough, professor emeritus of biology at Alfred University, after a more than 30-year battle with Parkinson's Disease. Dr. Rough died Wednesday, March 7, 2007 at the Palliative Care Center & Hospice of Newton, NC. Dr. Rough joined the Alfred University faculty as an instructor in biology in 1952, and took a two-year leave of absence to work on his Ph.D. degree. He returned in 1958 as an assistant professor, rising to become a full professor in 1966. He retired in 1987. Named a Kruson Distinguished Professor in 1999 in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the University, Dr. Rough received the University's Excellence in Teaching Award in 1979 and 1983. Dr. Rough was known as an ecologist who used the living laboratories of Keuka and Seneca Lakes to teach students about fresh water systems. He was among co-founder and director of Alfred University's multi-disciplinary program in Environmental Studies, and taught a wide range of biology courses, from general biology to limnology. In awarding him emeritus status, Dr. Marlin Miller, who was then chairman of the AU Board of Trustees, called Dr. Rough "one of our most valuable natural resources." Colleague Dr. John Stull, professor emeritus of physics, remembers Dr. Rough "with great affection and admiration. I knew Gaylord for 55 years, shared a course with him and worked with him on several projects involving his study of Keuka Lake. He was a learned, kind and considerate man who could, in the face of any adversity, manage to smile and persevere. He was generous in his judgment of others, and the worst I ever heard him say of anyone was to refer to them as 'certain individuals.' His class presentations were scholarly and effective, and he communicated his knowledge of and love for his subject in a quiet manner that excited interest and the appreciation of the material. I greatly enjoyed my attendance at them, and his standard of work served as a challenge to me. "Many people have observed all these things, but perhaps few know of his heroic efforts in support of the Keuka Lake project. When a boat needed maintenance, he did it. When an alumnus gave the University a run-down but serviceable powerboat, he completely refinished it, all by himself. He was a frequent visitor to the New York State Surplus Depot in Canandaigua, and obtained from it many sow's ears, which he then turned into purses. He was not just a professor, but also an engineer, mechanic and craftsman." Gaylord never asked to be recognized for all these extra things, but we remind ourselves of them and of the legacy of good that he left us. In his later years, in spite of deteriorating health, even after retirement he kept working for us all. He was truly one of the "Alfred Heroes". He cannot be replaced, but he CAN serve as a standard for the rest of us. May we all be deserving of him," Dr. Stull wrote. "Gaylord Rough was a gentleman, a scholar and a wonderful teacher with an infectious ability to convince students to appreciate and enjoy science as much as he did," recalled another colleague, Dr. Brad Bowden, professor of biology. "Gaylord was an extremely versatile biologist who taught virtually every course during his long tenure at AU and was instrumental in developing the original Environmental Studies Program. Even as his condition (Parkinson's disease) progressed, he continued to be the scientist and teacher he always was. He would borrow brain models and charts to use in giving talks to the Rochester Parkinson's Support Group, and in recent years had deep brain surgery and electrode implants, not only in an attempt to alleviate his condition, but also because he realized the need for research in this procedure so that it could continue to be perfected for treatment of other victims of Parkinson's disease." Gaylord was especially precise and articulate both orally and in writing. Gaylord was dedicated to his family, the Union University Church, Alfred University and the Alfred Community. If there was need for something to be done, you can be sure that Gaylord would be there to help out," Dr. Bowden said. Born Nov. 17, 1924, in Cochran, PA, Dr. Rough was the son of Homer and Maude Watson Rough. He began his education in a one-room schoolhouse, and entered the U.S. Army Medical Corps after graduation from high school, serving from June 1943 to August 1946 and rising to the rank of staff sergeant. He attended DePauw University from 1946 to 1949, transferring to the University of Pittsburgh to complete his B.S. degree in biology in 1950. He received a Master of Science degree in 1952 and a Ph.D. degree in zoology and ecology, also from the University of Pittsburgh, in 1961. In August 1949, he married his teen-age sweetheart Elzada May Deeter, also of Cochran; she died May 25, 2006. A daughter, Shirley Ann Csete, predeceased them on May 19, 1990. They are survived by a daughter Linda S. (Ronald) Probst of Conover, NC; a son Allan C (Marianne) Rough of Bowie, MD; son-in-law Stephen Csete of Illion, NY; seven grandchildren: Samuel and Kali Nave of Boston, MA; Steven and Michael Csete of Illion; Andrea Probst of Atlanta, GA; Rachel Probst of Alexandria, VA and William Johnson of Holly Hill, SC. Dr. Rough is also survived by two sisters, Doris (Ralph) Hines of Cochran, PA, and Dorothy (Maury) Bonecutter of Auburn, IN; three brothers, John (Berdina) Rough of Clymer, NY; Dale (Pauline) Rough of Akron, OH; and Floyd (Mary) Rough of Merced, CA,

as well as numerous nieces,nephews and friends. The family has asked that memorial contributions in Dr. Rough's name be made to the National Parkinson Foundation, 1501 NW 9th Ave., Miami, FL 33136-1494or to the Alfred University Baccalaureate Scholarship Program, 1 Saxon Drive, Alfred, NY 14802.