

Summer 2008  
Volume 4

# KSU Chemist

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Dear Friends -

Typically at this time of year, the campus is in its calmest and most attractive state. It is a joy to come to work everyday in this park-like setting. However, this has not been a typical summer: around 11:00 p.m. on June 11, a tornado struck Manhattan, causing extensive damage to homes and businesses, and to several structures on campus. Although the clean-up will require quite some time, fortunately no lives were lost in our community. None of Chemistry's buildings were hit, but Cardwell, Weber and the Engineering complex all suffered serious blows.

Our students, faculty and staff continue to do remarkable things, only a few of which can be enumerated here. Two of our graduating seniors, Amy Twite and Lydia (Roberts) Barrigan, were recognized with Honorable Mentions in the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship competition. Amy, whose research was conducted with Prof. Dan Higgins, will begin her graduate work at the Scripps Research Institute next Fall while Lydia, who worked in Prof. Duy Hua's group, is headed to the University of North Carolina for her Ph.D. studies.

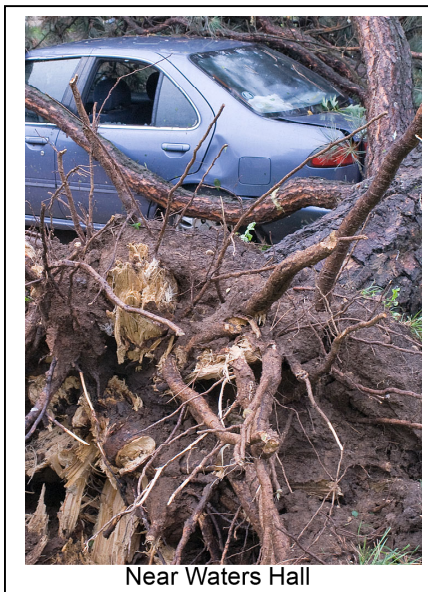
Nate Schultheiss (Ph.D. 2007 with Prof. Christer Aakeröy) received a Fulbright Scholar Award and has been conducting research in Strasbourg with Nobel Laureate Jean-Marie Lehn.

Mike Reppert, senior in Prof. Ryszard Jankowiak's group, was named KSU's Outstanding Undergraduate in Research, and Scott McCall, sophomore conducting research with Prof. Stefan Kraft, was awarded a Goldwater Scholarship.

Our Alumni Advisory Council gathered here late in September and shared their insights and advice on "life after college" with a large, receptive group of graduate and undergraduate students.



North of Cardwell Hall



Near Waters Hall

The Alumni Council will convene again this Fall, and will share their experiences in dealing with unexpected challenges in the workplace – the idea is to help our current students understand that being trained in one specific discipline of chemistry will not restrict one's abilities to make contributions in other areas.

The prospect of finding someone to assume Richard Bachamp's position (after his nearly 40 years at KSU!) was daunting, but we were fortunate to be able to hire Ron Jackson as a Research Technologist. Ron is extremely knowledgeable, talented and helpful - given those traits, it isn't at all surprising that he has fit right in.

I'm very happy to say that our efforts to increase our graduate stipends received substantial boosts last year. Our good friends Jerry and Judy Reed have begun to establish the Reed Graduate Fellowship. The Reeds previously endowed an undergraduate scholarship of the same magnitude - we are truly fortunate to have their continued generous support. Likewise, David and Wendy Manzo have authorized the establishment of a scholarship for undergrads and graduate students alike - another wonderful and welcome development. These major gifts, coupled with our previously-established Alumni Graduate Fellowship Fund, constitute significant progress toward this most important goal.

A magnificent new undergraduate scholarship has also come into being. Gene Howe (BS 1936 and still going strong!) had previously endowed a substantial fund that became active last year.

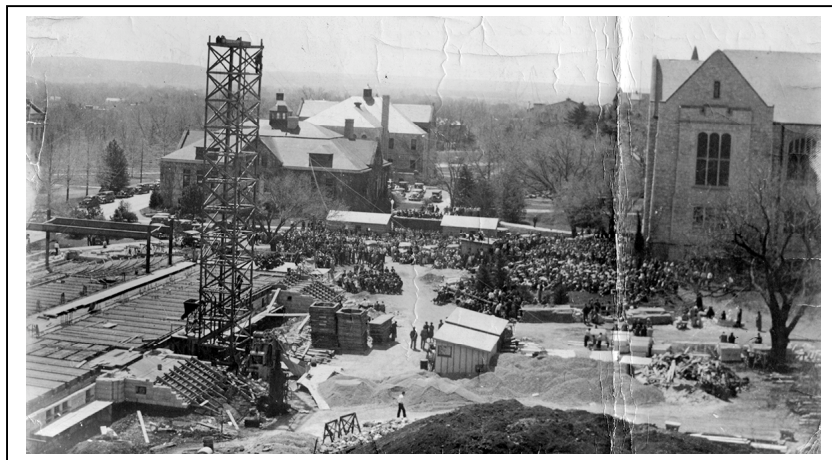
In this era of declining State funding (a trend likely to continue), the generosity of our friends and alumni is crucial to sustaining our success.

On behalf of all of us, thank you for your good works, your good will, and your support - you make us proud to continue the legacy to which you've contributed. I hope to see you or hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Eric Maatta

## The end of an era: Chemistry to leave Willard Hall!



*The undated photo at left shows Willard Hall in its early construction stage in the late 1930s. The view looks southeast with Farrell Library visible at right. A large crowd is gathered for an unknown purpose - perhaps for a Chemistry Magic Show!*

If the projection offered by KSU Facilities holds true, the Chemistry Department will move our remaining presence out of Willard Hall and into the Chemistry-Biochemistry building before the start of the 2008 Fall semester.

The remaining Chemistry space in Willard - our Main and Accounting Offices, the faculty and students' meeting and mail rooms, the Help Room, *etc.* - is to be moved into the 2nd floor of Chem-Biochem as part of a decade-long "domino effect" principally involving us, Biochemistry (now housed in new Chalmers Hall), and Art (moving into Willard from West Stadium).

According to Prof. Schrenk's detailed King Lecture remarks on the occasion of the Department's centenary in 1976, Willard Hall was constructed during 1937-39 using \$450,000 in State funds and \$272,000 from the federal Public Works Administration. The talent of the WPA artisans who worked on the building can be seen throughout: in the brass light fixtures, the vaulted ceilings, and the many exterior flourishes extolling chemistry's contributions to industry, agriculture and society.

*The photo at right also looks southeast and was taken during the Finals Week ice storm in December 2007. The Hale Library addition is at far right.*

It will be difficult to leave Willard: although it has been unfit for research purposes for some time, it has a character and warmth that is lacking in many modern buildings. We will still be principal users of the Willard 114 lecture hall, and at least the alchemical symbols inlaid on the first floor entryway will remain in place.

Willard Hall holds many memories - please consider sharing your recollections in a letter or an e-mail ([chemdept@ksu.edu](mailto:chemdept@ksu.edu)): we'll post some of your contributions on our webpage.





Donors to the Chemistry Department 7/1/06 - 6/30/08: Thanks to one and all for your support!

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Call, write, e-mail, or  
better yet, stop by.  
We'd enjoy hearing  
from you.

## Outreach and Broader Impacts

Our department has always excelled in reaching out to students: as just one example, many of us can recall either receiving or providing academic assistance in the Chemistry Help Room that was started by Prof. Moser more than 30 years ago. With NSF grants now requiring evidence of "broader impacts", our culture places us ahead of the pack.

Chemistry students, faculty and staff are increasingly active in a variety of education and outreach activities that aim to inspire, inform and delight various audiences. The GROW ([www.ksu.edu/grow](http://www.ksu.edu/grow)) workshop brings middle school girls to campus for three days of hands-on experiments during the summer: participating Chemistry faculty have included Profs. Rayat, Hua, Culbertson, Ito, and Hollingsworth. Our local ACS Section and AXE sponsor National Chemistry Day activities at Manhattan's public library and shopping mall. Senior Scientific Glassblower Jim Hodgson regularly hosts groups of elementary school children for demonstrations. Our High School Chemistry Symposia, as organized by Prof. Jankowiak, have really taken off: the second iteration in April attracted 80 students and 15 teachers from Kansas and Missouri. These, and many other activities, continue our commitment to outreach in line with our land-grand heritage.

### A Round of Applause for:

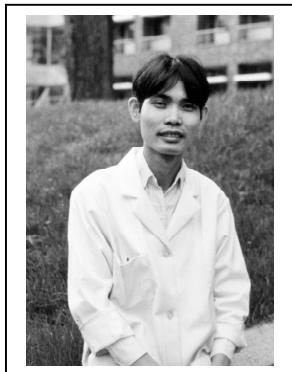
*Paul Smith*, promoted to the rank of Professor and recipient of the 2007-08 *Segebrecht Distinguished Faculty Achievement Award*.

*Christer Aakerøy*, named as *Regional Associate Editor for the Americas* of the Royal Society of Chemistry's journal *CrystEngComm*.

*Chris Culbertson*, recipient of the 2007 *Masao Horiba Award*, given at a special ceremony in Kyoto.

*Brenda Luther*, who in 2008 earned the distinction of becoming a *Certified Chemical Hygiene Officer*.

### Remember when?



The photo at left dates from *ca.* 1982, when Duy Hua was freshly arrived at K-State as an Assistant Professor after his postdoctoral appointment with E. J. Corey at Harvard.

In those early years, Duy's research efforts were concentrated on syntheses of natural products and the development of various asymmetric protocols. That work eventually led to compounds showing promise in treating cancers, cataracts and most recently, Alzheimer's disease.

Work in Duy's group now extends to the synthesis of enzyme inhibitors, molecular precursors to nanotubes, and bio-derived materials for specialty polymers, among other things. Some 30 graduate students, 20 postdocs and 40 undergraduates have been trained in his group. Duy has justly received many honors including the Southern Illinois University Alumni Achievement Award, six international Visiting Professorships, and a KSU University Distinguished Professorship.

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