In Memory of John S. Doctor (1956-2005)

Doctor Doctor, as he was affectionately called by his students at Duquesne University, met a sudden and untimely death on October 25. John’s passion for research, dedication to his students, and willingness to help were the common characteristics that his colleagues and students repeatedly recalled at the memorial service held at the university chapel on Saturday October 29. These qualities were also recognized by the university where John was given not one, but three teaching awards during his tenure in the Department of Biological Sciences of the Bayer School of Natural and Environmental Sciences at Duquesne University: University Creative Teaching Award (1993), Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching (1995) and President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching (1999). He was also recognized with the Faculty Award for Excellence in Service (2004) for his contributions to help foster his colleagues’ advancement and the school’s programs. “Duquesne loses a great man” is the headline of the article on the front page of the university paper, The Duquesne Duke, and it reflects the feeling on campus about his premature passing.

John received his A.B. in biology from the College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts (1978) and Ph.D. in Genetics from UC Berkeley (1985). He was a postdoctoral fellow at the Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison before becoming a faculty member at Duquesne Univ. (1991-2005). He was the Interim Chair of the Department of Biological Sciences during the past year, and was totally immersed in advancing the department, despite the temporary nature of the position.

John’s research included molecular and genetic studies of growth factors during development of Drosophila and Tribolium, bone formation, adult stem cells and biomaterial evaluation. In the last five years, John used multidisciplinary approaches to develop methods to culture adult stem cells and osteoblasts in three-dimensional media, as a member of the bone tissue engineering and regenerative medicine consortium formed by Duquesne University, Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh.

Doctor Doctor was very active in the Society for Developmental Biology, as a member of the Professional Development and Education Committee (2000-2004), organizer of the 2004 Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting at Duquesne, and instructor of education outreach sessions at several regional and annual meetings.

John is survived by his wife, Dr. Mary Alleman, a plant developmental geneticist and faculty member in the same department; sons Sam (19), a student at Duquesne, and Nathan (13), and daughter Adrienne (17). Family was first on John’s list of priorities, and he was known in his community as a coach of youth soccer. His Duquesne students were like his extended family, and they all felt fortunate to have worked with him. John will be sorely missed by all.

A memorial fund in John's name will be established at Duquesne University. For further information, contact Dr. Richard Elinson by email (elinson@duq.edu).
Links:
Faculty Page at Duquesne: http://www.science.duq.edu/faculty/doctor.html
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