



Charles S. Parmenter

October 12, 1933 - January 26, 2025

Distinguished Professor Emeritus Charles S. (Charlie) Parmenter of Bloomington, IN and East Orleans, MA passed away peacefully in Bloomington at the age of 91 on January 26th, 2025 with family at his side. Son of Professor Charles L. and Hazeltene S. Parmenter, he was born and raised in the Philadelphia suburb of Chestnut Hill. He attended the William Penn Charter School and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Chemistry. After service in the U.S Air Force 2nd Lieutenant as a photo intelligence officer and at the Dupont Chemical Company as a technical representative, he decided to pursue a career in science. He completed a Ph.D. in Physical Chemistry at the University of Rochester and a post-doctoral fellowship at Harvard.

Charlie began his long affiliation with Indiana University (IU) in 1964, joining the faculty as an Assistant Professor. He was appointed Associate Professor in 1968, Professor in 1972, and Distinguished Professor in 1988. He retired in 2008. Charlie's research focused on the transfer of energy and behavior of the benzene molecule following stimulation by light and other energy sources. During his time at IU, 25 members of his research group earned Ph.D. degrees. Additionally, 16 postdoctoral fellows worked with Charlie, four students earned Masters's degrees, and at least 11 undergraduates spent significant time working in Charlie's lab.

Charlie's awards included election to the National Academy of Sciences in 1995 and the American Academy for the Arts and Sciences in 1996. He earned a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1971 and a Fulbright Senior Scholarship in 1980. Other awards and honors included an IU faculty teaching award, a Humboldt Award, the Spiers Medal of the Faraday Society, and many others.

He and his wife of 68 years, Pattie, enjoyed entertaining his students and colleagues at their home, hosting annual Beaujolais Nouveau wine parties to celebrate the release the latest French harvest. Charlie's favorite hobby was photography, and he won many awards for black and white images of nature and family scenes taken with his beloved Leica camera, which was always at the ready. He relished extended summer stays at the family cottage in East Orleans, MA, within walking distance of the beach and tidal estuary.

Charlie is predeceased by his parents, sister Carolyn and son Leigh (Sara). Surviving are his wife Pattie, son Tighe (Pamela) of St Augustine, FL, daughter Kyle Landman (Douglas) of Grand Rapids, MI. and grandchildren Christopher, Natalie, Maty and Will.

A memorial celebration recognizing his career at Indiana University will be held at 1:30 PM on Friday June 6th, 2025 in the Harry G. Day Lecture Hall (Room C122), IU Chemistry building, with a reception to follow. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations in Charlie's name be made to the Indiana University Foundation or National Academy of Sciences Office of Development.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JUN 6. 1:30 PM (ET)

IU Chemistry Building, Harry G. Day Lecture Hall (Room C122)
800 E Kirkwood Ave
Bloomington, IN 47405