



The University of Vermont  
FACULTY SENATE

**Resolution in Memoriam  
Martin E. Kuehne  
Professor of Chemistry  
1961 – 2017**

**Presented by Matthew D. Liptak  
Assistant Professor of Chemistry  
Oct. 23, 2017**

Martin Kuehne, Professor Emeritus of Chemistry, passed away unexpectedly on August 4, 2017.

Born in 1931 on Long Island, Martin moved to Dresden, Germany while young and attended secondary schools in Switzerland before completing his undergraduate degree at Columbia University in 1952. He received an M.A. from Harvard University in 1953, and returned to Columbia to complete his Ph.D. in 1956 with Gilbert Stork. After working at CIBA Pharmaceuticals, he joined the UVM faculty as an Assistant Professor in 1961. As part of the organization of the Graduate College in the 1950's, the Ph.D. and M.S. degrees in Chemistry were initiated, and Martin's hire was a key part of the establishment and success of the graduate program in the Department of Chemistry. The Department's first graduate student received her degree with Martin in 1963, and he was the advisor to 46 Ph.D. and M.S. students during his tenure as a full-time faculty member. Many of the chemists trained by Martin have themselves gone on to make lasting scientific contributions throughout their independent careers.

Martin had a substantial impact on the research profile of the Department. He was internationally renowned for his work on the chemical synthesis of indole alkaloid natural products in pursuit of developing cancer chemotherapeutic agents and anti-addictive treatments. This research was continuously supported by the National Institutes of Health for 35 years, through most of his tenure as a full-time faculty member. The synthetic

pathways he developed to prepare some of the most structurally complex alkaloids known, including members of the *Vinca*, *Strychnos* and *Aspidosperma* alkaloid families, were often inspired by nature and were frequently described as "elegant" by his peers. He presented numerous invited lectures at national chemistry conferences and at universities. As a mark of the interest in translating his work to production of pharmaceuticals, he was also invited to speak at industrial research laboratories including DuPont, Merck, Bristol Myers Squibb, Pfizer, and others. Martin reveled in hands-on laboratory work and remained active in the laboratory throughout his career, maintaining an office and research laboratory in the Chemistry Department even after transitioning to Emeritus status in 2003. He assisted in the move of the Department to its new home in Discovery Hall in May 2017 and continued to work on new ideas until his passing.

Martin taught courses in organic chemistry for many years, including courses at both the graduate and undergraduate level and ranging from 5 to 150 students per class. He advised numerous undergraduate research projects in synthetic organic chemistry. From 1976 to 1978, he served as Acting Chairman of the Chemistry Department, and was a member of the Graduate College Executive Council from 1977 to 1981 and 1984 to 1988. He served as a patent advisor through the Graduate College for 21 years.

As a leader, mentor, and friend, Martin's passing is a great loss for the Chemistry Department and for the University community. He will be sorely missed.

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Catherine A. Paris  
President, Faculty Senate

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E. Thomas Sullivan  
President, University of Vermont