

Student memories of Prof. Bill Hosford

Roger Brewer

Very sad to hear this. Professor Hosford was an absolutely great guy, and a great teacher. Thoroughly enjoyed his classes, not to mention the departmental parties at his house. He was a big part of my education and my career, and I'm greatly humbled to have had him be part of my life. RIP, Professor Hosford.

Chongmin Kim

Ever since I left Ann Arbor to work for General Motors R&D in 1982, I visited him on a weekend in December every year. I told my GM friends who knew Bill that it was my annual pilgrimage. To me he was a saint and his wife, Peggy, an angel. The attached photo was taken just before I left for Korea to teach in 2010. It was unbearably sad to see their health decline afterwards.

When I taught metal deformation, I told the class that pre-1985 was the Romantic Period of metallurgy in which professors knew how metal deformed by intuition and presented simple, yet accurate and practical equations. I had students memorize Bill's concise paper at JOM as an example.

As his former student, I failed to make Bill look good by doing my best at work, creating respect and acknowledgement on my part. But, he was so kind always, never showing his disapproval or even encouragement. As a teacher, he encouraged students to think again and again and challenge him whenever the previous answers did not seem correct. About the time I was finishing up my thesis, he showed me an equation that he developed based on my data and told me that somehow it did not work at the right end of the graph. The next day, I told him that he missed a condition at that region and by considering that situation and revising his equation, the equation will be correct at all levels. He instantly smiled, and that was the time when I saw him the happiest as a teacher. When I taught in Korea, I was utterly disappointed that students do not ask question even though they did not fully understand. Never challenging the professor was an essential Confucianistic attitude there.

Before GM, I worked at Climax Molybdenum Company, situated at the corner of Huron Parkway and Plymouth. I pursued my doctorate degree while working at Climax full-time. I had two children and a hyperactive puppy, and a wife who was a full-time nurse. I was 30 pounds lighter compared with my body before I came to Ann Arbor. Some time in the 80's, I told Mrs. Hosford how hard my life was when I was a company worker and a student at the same time while having a family. She smiled and said, "Chongmin, no one can say his life was harder than mine. When Bill was in school, we had a baby every year for four straight years, and Bill had no idea what it took to care for the babies. He was at school all the time. One day I complained that I had not had time to read a book for more than two years. That surprised Bill, and he offered to be a househusband for a week so that I could read. He did, and even though he was an awful cook, I loved everything he put on the table."

When he first saw me in the fall of 1972, I was trying to transfer to his department from previous discipline of physics. He quickly and correctly figured me out that it would take a lot to make an engineer out of me but I had a good heart and good body. After a year of hard time, and seeing that with a wife and a baby coming I needed money. So he had me make single crystal aluminum samples, then after another semester found a job at Climax. My life in this country would surely have gone quite a different course without his kind actions.



Marcus Collins

He will definitely be missed.

Tom Fennell

What a great guy. My first memory was meeting with him before declaring MSE my concentration, he said, "If you declare now, you can come to the party at my house this weekend." It made me laugh, I took another semester to declare, but did make three end-of-the-year parties at his house.

John Keough

Bill Hosford was a professor of mine in the 1970's. (No MSE student from that era will ever forget the lab where he had us reduction rolling brass and doing recrystallization heat treatments). In later years he became a mentor and friend. He was an engineer, an outdoorsman, an author and a splendid artist.....a quirky Renaissance man. He came out to Joyworks last spring for a lost-foam bronze pour. He was physically limited but still had his opinions! The Michigan community lost a great friend with his passing. Condolences to his family.

Christopher Michael

His house parties were great. Always a good conversation about old school metallurgy. Had him for 470 metals and 420 Mechanical Behavior of Materials.

David Norman

I have good memories working with Dr. Hosford as a TA for the Intro to Materials Science course and hanging out at his house parties. He was a good guy, and an impressive water color painter too.

Daniel Schaupner

A long and full life for sure, but still very hard to hear this news. So grateful to have been a student of his. He also helped me personally as an undergrad advisor to avoid spending an extra semester at Michigan. I'll always remember him strolling to the MSE lounge daily to have his coffee with George Brooks and Bob Snow. I remember him in the 90s talking about how he wanted to write a book on canoeing, because he did so often in Canada. When I visited him in 2010, I asked him if he ever got around to the book, and he was so proud to show me a copy of his book about wilderness canoeing. Such a very smart, rebellious, and fun character. The world of metals and materials has lost a brilliant individual. I hope he has found the happiest of canoeing waters in the great beyond. Much love and thoughts and prayers to his family.

Lindsay Shuller-Nickles

The MSE picnics at Prof. Hosford's house will go down in the books! He was a great professor and best wishes to his family.

Jessica TerBush

MSE won't be the same without Prof. Hosford! I can remember him celebrating his 75th birthday while teaching our 470 class, MMS picnics at his house, and seeing him walk to the lounge for coffee with Smitty (or one of the other dogs) trotting beside him. Prof. Hosford is the reason I will **never** forget that iron is BCC at room temperature too. Rest in peace.

Aaron Tyler

An amazing professor. His metals class was the best experience I had in college. He will always be in my mind.

Charles Van Hoy

Rest In Peace, Prof. Hosford. I felt lucky to have you as a professor.

Yun Zhu

Saddened by the news. Dr. Hosford was Co-chairman of my doctorate committee and thesis advisor. A great teacher with abundance of wisdom, he taught his students not only mechanical behaviors of metal alloys, but, more importantly, the practical skills that turned out to be so useful for a professional.

When I met with Dr. Hosford for the first time to discuss my doctorate work, he pulled a book off the bookshelf. It was a dissertation from one of his students. "I want you to write your thesis like his – short," he said. How short? 77 pages. "It is easy to write a long one," he continued, "but it is not easy to write one that is short and clear. Concise, so to speak." Concise writing is a learning that I still practice today.

Faculty memories

Ron Gibala

MSE Chair, 1984-1994

Interim Dean, 2005-2006

Van Vlack Professor Emeritus, 2004-present

When I think of Bill Hosford, even after learning of his recent death, I can only smile. I smile because I think of all the ways he lived a vibrant and positive life. To borrow from *The Reader's Digest*, he is a most unforgettable character.

I first met Bill at a research conference on metal forming at the General Motors Technical Center in the late 1970's. There I learned quickly that he was an extremely well-recognized expert in this particular area of metallurgy, among several others. A few years later, while serving as an interim program officer at NSF, I discovered Bill was one of my grantees, and I received a copy of his highly regarded text on metal forming. Then in 1984, I came to the UM as the chair of the materials department and became Bill's boss (as if Bill ever really needed one). And it's been a pleasant experience ever since.

I'll remember times when my wife Jan and I would go out to dinner with Bill and Peg and then return to their home for an evening of games and puzzles, several of which Bill had invented. I can recall getting decently good at card games like ninety-nine and Scotch bridge. Because Bill was such a classic academic intellectual, these evenings were characterized by a remarkable mixture of deep thought and fun. In so many ways, Bill had the ability to make you think at the same time he made the thinking fun to do.

I'll remember seeing Bill having replaced the missing screw on the frames of his eye glasses with a paper clip, one of many examples of Hosfordian engineering quick fixes. Solutions like this carried over to other parts of his personal and professional life.

I'll remember visiting his office to talk about research and course topics. Of course, it wasn't easy to visit Bill's office because, politely speaking, his office was always somewhat less than neat. Bill confirmed to me the famous (infamous?) story from his MIT days that one evening a rookie security guard reported Bill's office had been ransacked, and that upon arriving at the scene Bill asked "What's the problem?"

I'll remember comments students offered about Bill. Some examples: "He's a perfect picture of the stereotypical professor I had hoped to experience in college." Many student evaluations described his courses as "tough, but fair and fun." Others said they couldn't imagine better student-faculty interactions than those at MMS fall and spring picnics (over several decades!) at the Hosford farm home. I'll also remember that many MSE students have been scholarship recipients from the endowment fund that Bill and Peg initiated.

I'll remember that Bill was never afraid to challenge existing research-related knowledge. A classic Hosfordian quote was "It just doesn't make sense!" And he would dutifully go about trying to prove the point, sometimes with success, sometimes not. I can recall meeting distinguished researchers at conferences I attended around the world who would ask "What is Bill Hosford working on these days?"

No one could forget his talent for water-color painting, especially of scenes from his canoe trips on Canadian wilderness rivers and other points north or west of Michigan. His family is so lucky to have many of these works in a beautiful bound volume that will be a lasting legacy of his abilities.

In retirement, Bill engaged in an unbelievably productive textbook writing activity on many metallurgy and materials engineering topics, but also fun topics like his love for canoeing. I once kidded Bill, that while many of us have been book-of-the-month club members, he was getting close to becoming a book-of-the-month author. He smiled and uncharacteristically blushed.

It's good that I've had to write these words from our home in Florida, away from books and notes in my Dow Building office. Otherwise, I would have gone on and on documenting Bill's achievements. Instead, let me finish by thanking John Allison for deciding to name his collegiate professorship in Bill's honor. Although Bill received many honors and awards for his teaching and research over the years, this had to have been especially rewarding for him.

Professor Emeritus J. Wayne Jones

It was with sadness that I learned of the passing of Bill Hosford. We have lost a truly unique individual. Bill was a widely recognized expert on deformation processing in metals. His devotion to educating generations of students through his excellent teaching and his textbooks and monographs will be long remembered by his colleagues and students. I'm sure in the coming months his many accomplishments will be remembered, in tribute, by MSE and by his many friends and colleagues around the world.

Bill was one of the first people I met in 1978 when I came to U-M as an assistant professor. From 1979-84 the Jones family lived across the road from Bill and Peg Hosford. Ours were the only two houses on the unpaved portion of Traver Road so Bill and Peg were our only neighbors. And they both were wonderful neighbors who many times lent a helping hand and their friendship, and often a place at their table to our young family.

As many of you know, Bill liked nothing more than canoeing in the Canadian wilderness where travel by water was the only means of transportation. He combined his love of wilderness with a love of painting and was recognized as a wonderful watercolorist who documented his life, family and travels with many paintings.

We are all better for having known Bill. As one colleague said to me on learning of his passing, "he was a true gem." His talents, his sense of humor, and his energy and enthusiasm for life will be sorely missed by us all.