

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

Theodore Peter Schaefer
1933-2007



On September 15, 2007 at his home, Ted slipped away quietly (as was his custom at social gatherings) after a brief illness which he faced with courage and grace. Predeceased by his parents and by his sisters Lily and Irma, Ted is survived by his brother Wilf, sister-in-law Ann, brothers-in-law John and Jake, his wife Nicola, daughter Catherine, sons Dominic and Ben, and a multi-generational flock of nieces and nephews. An academic, Ted's trajectory as a scientist was an interesting one. As he himself noted in a 1997 article in the Encyclopedia of Nuclear Magnetic Resonance, he was born in a depression-ridden pioneer village [Gnadenenthal] which lacked most physical amenities, even roads. Nevertheless, a good basic education was available and was followed by a sound training in the classical aspects of chemistry at the University of Manitoba. Following completion of a Masters degree, Ted went to Oxford University on a Shell scholarship and, taking time off from his studies occasionally to play on the ice hockey team, subsequently received his D. Phil. He then returned to Winnipeg to accept a faculty position in the Chemistry Department at the U. of M. During his 40-year career at the University, Ted established and directed an active research program in nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy. Research fellows and some 30 graduate students (many of whom received doctoral degrees) participated in this work and now occupy university positions across the country and beyond. The excellence of Ted's research which led to over 300 publications earned him numerous scientific awards and honours, including a Fellowship in the Royal Society of Canada. Ted was a superb teacher and mentor of both undergraduate and graduate students and in 1980 received the annual teaching award from the Graduate Students Association. Throughout his career, he provided outstanding support to his students, his colleagues, the U. of M. and the Chemistry profession in Canada. His scientific excellence was recognized by an honorary D. Sc. From the University of Winnipeg in 1982, and an appointment as a Member of the Order of Canada in 2003. At the time of his retirement in 1997, he was Distinguished Professor at the U. of M. Chemistry Department. Ted enjoyed his decade of retirement. Energetic physically, he walked miles each day wearing a variety of hats literally, not figuratively to protect his head from the elements. Equally vigorous mentally, and a life-long reader and thinker, he appreciated having time to immerse himself in subjects such as English and German literature, history, science and philosophy. And he enjoyed nothing more than an evening of intellectual sparring with friends over a beer or two (or more). Deep gratitude to the folks at Hospice and Palliative Care Manitoba, who helped Ted's family avoid his being hospitalized. Many thanks, also, to family members, friends, neighbours and colleagues for their constant support during Ted's illness. At Ted's request, cremation has taken place and there will be no service. However, a celebration of his life will be held, probably at the U. of M., in the spring of 2008.

Credits: University of Manitoba