

Jim Boyles

Professor Emeritus of Chemistry James Glenn Boyles died on Aug. 8, 2020, at age 83.

Jim grew up in Lemoyne, Pa., earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry from The Pennsylvania State University in 1959, and a doctorate in physical chemistry from Rutgers University in 1966, completing a dissertation on "The Mechanism of the Polymerization of Gaseous Formaldehyde."

Appointed an assistant professor of chemistry at Bates in 1966, he was promoted to associate professor in 1973 and full professor in 1980. He retired as professor emeritus in June 1999. In his 33 years on the Bates faculty, Jim served as department chair for 12 years and taught courses in inorganic chemistry, physical chemistry, and thermodynamics and kinetics, as well as a Short Term course, "Environment, Chemistry, and Society" that anticipated the growing interest in environmental studies.

Deeply devoted to undergraduate teaching, Jim was one of the first Bates faculty members to see that computing, more than just a "high-speed calculator," as he once said, could play a role in undergraduate STEM teaching. In 1969 he won a college grant to investigate using the college's time-sharing connection with a mainframe computer at Dartmouth to write programs to help students who were struggling to grasp foundational concepts in chemistry, seeing the value in the "two-way exchange" that such programs could create. He later investigated the creation of computer simulations of gas chromatography and taught a Short Term course on computer applications in chemistry.

His service to Bates was broad and deep. In 1968, as founding chair of the college's medical studies program, he became the architect and driving force of the college's program to support students applying to graduate medical programs. He later chaired the faculty committees on student conduct and computer services. In the 1980s he organized a speaker series that brought to campus, among other scientists, Nobel Prize winner

Dr. Linus Pauling. He led summer sessions for secondary school educators and students, judged local science fairs, and taught Elderhostels.

In 1999, President Emeritus Don Harward described Jim as “a counselor to those exploring careers in the sciences, a patient and encouraging teacher, and an active scholar and community citizen” who for 33 years “assisted hundreds of students explore the detailed physical and living structures of the world we experience.”

With an expert knowledge of Robert’s Rules of Order, he deftly served as moderator of the Pownal, Maine, town meeting for years and served the town in myriad other ways. He authored *On Pownal Time: 100 Years in a Rural Maine Town, 1908–2008*. He was an avid sailor, reader, musician, model builder, gardener, craftsman, and flight simulator pilot. He supported conservation causes in Maine and later in Seattle, Wash.

His survivors include his wife, Donna F. Boyles of 4400 Stone Way North, Apt. 200, Seattle WA 98103; daughters Kristen Boyles and Amanda Boyles McCloskey; two grandchildren; a sister; and their families.

To view the complete obituary for James Boyles, please visit: <https://legcy.co/32leXNr>

To view a 1998 retirement tribute by the late Dean of the Faculty Carl Benton Straub, please visit <https://www.bates.edu/chemistry-biochemistry/a-few-thoughts-about-jim-boyles/>