

OBITUARY

Philip J. Fay (1953–2014)

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Philip J. Fay, Ph.D., Professor of Biochemistry and Biophysics at the University of Rochester, passed away on June 25, 2014 at the age of 61. He succumbed to the multiple myeloma that he had battled valiantly for 6 years. Phil is survived by his wife of 38 years, Andrea, daughters Amber and Emily, and five grandchildren. On July 8th the flags at the University of Rochester were lowered in his honor.

Phil earned his Ph.D. from the University of Rochester in 1982 after performing thesis research under Robert Bambara on the structure and function of DNA polymerase III. His entry into the hemostasis field began with a postdoctoral fellowship in the laboratory of Victor Marder at the University of Rochester. His fellowship work resulted in a seminal publication identifying von Willebrand factor antigen II in plasma as the von Willebrand factor propeptide [1]. He moved on to a faculty position at the University of Rochester shortly thereafter and described one of the early purification procedures for human factor VIII and the characterization of its activation by thrombin [2]. Phil developed robust dual research programs on the biochemistry of factor VIII and HIV reverse transcriptase. He pursued the latter research in a 20-year collaboration with Dr. Bambara. Since the mid-2000s, Phil's research focused entirely on factor VIII biochemistry. Through his career Phil published 143 papers with over 70 dealing with the structure and function of factor VIII. The majority of his factor VIII work was published in *The Journal of Biological Chemistry*, *Biochemistry*, or this journal. He was a highly visible investigator in the factor VIII and hemostasis arenas.

Phil was a consummate professional, deeply committed to his scientific calling and extraordinarily loyal to his trainees. He maintained a high level of productivity throughout his career and even through his illness, which included numerous rounds of chemotherapy and two bone marrow transplants. In June 2013, while under a chemotherapy regimen that included high-dose steroids, he traveled to Amsterdam and gave an excellent invited review lecture on the structure and function of factor VIII. He gave his final lecture at the University of Rochester just a week before his demise while suffering from the effects of hypercalcemia. In his final days while under hospice care,



he worried incessantly about securing the professional future of his technician, graduate student and postdoctoral fellow who were still working in his laboratory.

For the two of us and many in hemostasis research, Phil was, above all, a friend. His ability to focus on the positive attributes of almost any circumstance endeared him to his colleagues. His was a humble and self-effacing demeanor even in the face of adversity. He found humor readily and chuckled deeply at even the poorest jokes sometimes made at his expense. In the 30 years that we have been colleagues, we met yearly at least once at ASH, AHA, the ISTH or the Gordon conference where we shared hilarity, fellowship and excellent adventures. They will live on in our memories of Phil.

Phil was a cherished colleague who was a true gentleman in the sometimes ungentlemanly world of academic medicine. He will be remembered for his ever-present smile, collegiality and devotion to his family.

References

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- 2 Fay PJ, Anderson MT, Chavin SI, Marder VJ. The size of human factor VIII heterodimers and the effects produced by thrombin. *Biochim Biophys Acta* 1986; **871**: 268–78.