

In memoriam

Morton Z. Hoffman, a beloved professor, esteemed researcher, and devoted family man, passed away suddenly on September 24, 2024. A giving humanitarian with a vibrant and always present sense of humor, Mort was born on April 22, 1935, to Martha and David Hoffman and raised in the Bronx with sister, Anne Hoffman (survived by).

It was there he developed a deep love for the city's cultural activities and museums. As a teenager, he spent countless hours at the New York Public Library, indulging in his passion for nonfiction humor. He played punchball in the streets, tennis in local parks, and was an avid baseball fan. (Watching, not playing!)

Mort's academic journey began at the Bronx High School of Science, where his aptitude for math and science flourished. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Hunter College of the City of New York, followed by an M.S. and Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of Michigan. He furthered his research as a postdoctoral research associate in photochemistry at Sheffield University in England.

In 1961, Mort joined the faculty of Boston University as a Professor of Chemistry, embarking on a remarkable 44-year career. He taught a wide range of courses to thousands of students, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. He was incredibly proud and honored to have impacted the many students along the way. Mort's research in solar energy conversion and the effects of ionizing radiation garnered him over 200 published articles and numerous book chapters in chemical literature. He received many research grants, collaborated with colleagues globally and developed deep friendships with many in the scientific community. Mort's dedication to teaching and his innovative approaches to chemistry education earned him numerous honors and awards throughout his career. He was named a Fellow of the American Chemical Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry. He received the Metcalf Cup and Prize for Excellence in Teaching from BU, the Outstanding Professional Achievement Award from the Alumni Association of Hunter College, the Volunteer Service Award from the American Chemical Society, and the Distinguished Contribution to Chemistry Education Award from IUPAC.



Beyond his professional achievements, Mort found great joy in his family life. He embraced the community in Sharon, MA with his wife, Sandy, with whom he was married for over 56 years. Sandy was an accomplished educator and taught business courses at various institutions. Together, they raised two daughters, Linda (Mike Fernando) and Julie (Larry Gracer), were blessed with four equally wonderful grandchildren, Olivia, Kyle, Sydney, and Zachary, who were Mort and Sandy's greatest joys. Together, they enjoyed traveling all over the world and especially with their grandkids, spoiling them on exotic trips. As avid Red Sox fans, Mort and Sandy followed their beloved team around the country. They also enjoyed attending a variety of performing arts events. Later, Mort lived with Sandy in Norton, MA, and then finally at The Whitney Place in Medway, MA.

In retirement, Mort remained active in volunteer work with the American Chemical Society and served on the Board of Directors of the Malta Conferences Foundation. His love for the arts continued as he streamed concerts and plays frequently, and participated in virtual webinars and conferences. Mort's passion for learning and his dedication to his field never wavered. Mort will be remembered as a brilliant educator, a respected researcher, and a loving family man with a joyful and witty sense of humor. His impact on the field of chemistry and the lives of his students and colleagues will be felt for generations to come. He leaves behind a legacy of excellence, curiosity, and a deep appreciation for the arts. Mort's memory will forever be cherished by his family, friends, and the scientific community.

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