

In Memoriam: Daryl Wayne Preston, January 15, 1939 - March 12, 2023

Born in the small Oklahoma town of Cyril in the south-central part of the state, the son of H. M. Preston, a shopkeeper, and Cleva Elizabeth Donnell, Daryl was raised and educated in tiny towns in West Texas, ending up in Nocona, near the historic Red River. He often commented that the towns he grew up in were exactly like the fading, wind-swept town in Peter Bogdanovich's 1971 movie *The Last Picture Show*.

He learned early the value of hard work and frugality. He was just a boy when he began to earn his own way working in local gas stations in these towns, some of which had populations of only a few hundred. By the time he was in high school, he spent his summers working on oil rigs, hard physical work that also raised questions in his curious mind that carried him into a diverse and successful career. Somehow, during this time, he managed to find time to play on the high school football team.

A college football scholarship gave him a chance to develop the scientific curiosity that began on the oil rigs and to discover some answers and further questions that led him to a career in physics. He earned his B.A. in 1961 from Austin College in Sherman Texas and his Ph.D. in 1970 at the University of Kansas, the first person in his family to earn advanced degrees.

With a doctorate in his pocket, he worked his way up to a career as a professor of physics and astronomy at California State University Hayward in northern California. He was a popular professor, praised by his students, faculty peers, and the school administration. He became known especially for workshops that he gave to other physics professors from around the country – a series of experiments that they could use in their undergraduate student laboratories. In addition to his classroom work in physics and astronomy, Daryl developed an astronomy course of 29 lectures that were recorded and available on the university's cable channel.

He was elected a Fellow in the American Physical Society in 1998. One hundred percent of his students ranked him as an "outstanding" professor. His work was recognized with the George and Miriam Phillips Outstanding Professor Award for 1999-2000. He retired from teaching in 2001, becoming Professor Emeritus.

Daryl published several books in his field: *Experiments in Physics: A Laboratory Manual for Scientists and Engineers*, 1991, *The Art of Experimental Physics* (with Eric R Dietz) 1991, *Experiments in Physics: A Laboratory Manual* (with M. Sternheim, et. al), and *Experiments in Physics with Computers*.

Summers, he often worked at the National Laboratory at Los Alamos, New Mexico. Over the years, he grew fond of the town of Santa Fe, where he and his wife, Jane, lived when he was working at the Laboratory. Together, they explored Santa Fe's many art galleries and Spanish colonial architecture and enjoyed the rugged country around the town.

Always physically active, Daryl was an enthusiastic runner, cyclist, rock climber, hiker, and backpacker. He enjoyed traveling and visited Europe, Alaska, and Mexico, often backpacking. He developed an interest in wine-making that became an important part of his life. He traveled around northern California discovering

and buying different varieties of grapes, experimenting with them, and creating his own wines.

Daryl had a talent for making friends. Eventually, he began to gather some of his friends into dining groups at which he served his own wines. His many friends, from different walks of life, came to look forward to these wine dinners.

The family was very important to Daryl and he was beloved by them. Two brothers and three sisters preceded him in death. He is survived by one brother, his former wife, Jane, six nephews, seven nieces, and many great nephews and great nieces.