

Alpha Chi Loses Two Dignitaries

We regret to announce the recent deaths of two notables in Alpha Chi.

Dr. Charles McDowell, the retired long-time sponsor of the Texas Alpha Theta chapter at the University of Texas at Arlington, died July 8, 2007, at the age of 85.

Dr. McDowell's roles at UT Arlington included service as chair of the Modern Languages Department and director of the Center for Post-Soviet and East European Studies. He was chapter sponsor until 2006. Under his leadership, the UT Arlington chapter was one of the largest in Alpha Chi, and Dr. McDowell was a fixture at annual conventions of the society for many years. One of his goals, to extend membership in Alpha Chi to graduate students, was realized this year with the amending of the Constitution.

Dr. McDowell was a retired U.S. Army colonel and a veteran of World War II. After the war he served in the occupational forces in Japan as a commandant and education officer. Later he served the Joint Chiefs of Staff as intelligence officer, a role that included being custodian of the "nuclear football" while traveling with the President.

Dr. John "Mike" White, recipient of Alpha Chi's first Distinguished Alumni Award, given in 1987, died August 3, 2007, at age 68 while visiting his son in Oklahoma City, Okla. He was a distinguished teaching professor and the Robert A. Welch Chair in Materials Chemistry at the University of Texas at Austin.

He was nominated for the Alpha Chi alumni award by the Arkansas Eta chapter at his undergraduate alma mater, Harding University. His Harding mentor was Dr. Joseph E. Pryor, long-time secretary-treasurer and then executive director of Alpha Chi.

Dr. White pioneered photochemistry research, and his interests spanned a wide range of topics related to surface and materials chemistry. His major contributions to science were techniques using surface physics to investigate surface chemical problems.

He had been at the university since 1966 after completing his Ph.D. at the University of Illinois. A highly regarded teacher and colleague, Dr. White graduated more than 50 doctoral students, many of whom now teach in universities around the world. He mentored numerous new faculty and engaged large numbers of undergraduates in research, always encouraging them to continue with graduate studies. Dr. White published more than 650 scholarly articles and served a term as chairperson of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry.