

WAYNE WILMARTH, COLLEAGUE

One afternoon in 1949, not long after I had joined U.S.C., I was in my office in the wooden building that had served as an army barracks and then housed our Freshman chemistry laboratories and my research lab and office. It was a normal Saturday, very quiet except for occasional roars from the football game in the nearby Coliseum. I heard someone bounding up the stairs and looked up just as Wayne appeared at the top, said hello and that I was going to get all weak and wan unless I took some time off to go fishing with him. I did, and for the next ten years we went together to Palos Verdes or other coastal areas where the fish were waiting to be speared and the abalone were waiting on the bottom in case the fish were hard to find. Most often we went with friends and, in the summer, with family too. What Wayne didn't say at the top of the stairs, but turned out to be a big attraction, was that the seafood we collected almost weekly was an important factor in matching family budgets to small academic salaries.

The trips to the beach and our frequent lunch time forays for a sandwich and a beer on weekdays gave us the time to talk at great length, especially about topics in chemistry, whether from our research, from the literature, or from lectures presented by visitors to the department. As I recall, I was enormously surprised, time after time, to find yet another area of chemistry on which Wayne had strong views based on detailed knowledge about the problems and prospects as well as on the cast of research workers involved. It is hard now to say much about these discussions, mostly more than twenty five years ago, except that we were delighted whenever we could reduce a problem to simple terms and consider what we would do next with it if we could.

It was not a time of great possibilities. My first research at U.S.C. depended on a Beckmann DU spectrophotometer from Wayne's laboratory that he made available to me in a way typical of his generosity and consideration.

Wayne became very quiet and sometimes seemed to be uncomfortable in groups of more than a few people, yet I heard from students in his classes at all levels that he was a most successful classroom teacher. For his part, Wayne said that one "had to learn a field to do research in it but to overlearn it to give a course in it". In his hands a purely intellectual approach to classroom teaching accomplished as much as many others could manage only by artificial dramatization of the material.

Many of the graduate students in the department appreciated Wayne's

special virtues and sought him out to discuss their own research. Not surprisingly the response of Wayne's faculty colleagues to his counseling "their" students was mixed. At one extreme were some of our senior colleagues, who seemed to find challenges to their guidance in the views the students brought back after their discussions with Wayne. One colleague complained that Wayne was a "contemporary Francis Bacon", a compliment to Wayne in my view. To be sure, there was also evidence from Wayne's remarks during his participation in seminars, and in examining graduate students, that he did not admire all of the research being done in the department. While he couched his views in terms of scientific analysis and chemical judgement, responses at a less exalted level were sometimes elicited.

Thus there was a noticeable tension among the faculty, with Wayne at one pole. While he always had a lot of support from some of the faculty, the other pole, at least during the 50s, comprised the departmental administration. As one could expect, this situation led to a measure of personal difficulty for Wayne rather than the reward he deserved for his role in helping to make the department a lively and stimulating place for the pursuit of chemical research. Nevertheless his unfaltering dedication to research and scholarship in chemistry during his life continues to inspire his friends, students, and colleagues.

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