

NEKROLOG

OBITUARY

Michael Charles Zerner
(1940–2000)

On February 2, 2000 our long-time colleague and friend Michael Charles Zerner (known to all in the theoretical chemistry community as Mike) died peacefully at North Florida Hospice after a long and difficult battle with cancer. Mike was born January 31, 1940 in Hull, Massachusetts and graduated from Carnegie-Mellon University in 1961. Subsequent graduate study with Martin Gouterman at Harvard led to M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in chemistry in 1966, and marked the beginning of an outstanding career as a theoretical chemist.

After serving for two years in the U. S. Army during which he reached the rank of Captain, he spent two years at Upsala University in Sweden with Per-Olov Löwdin as an N. I. H. Postdoctoral

Fellow. He subsequently took his first faculty position in 1970 as an assistant professor at Guelph University in Canada, where he later attained the rank of professor.

In 1981 he was appointed Professor of Chemistry at the University of Florida. His productive career was marked by exemplary teaching, research and service. From 1988 to 1994 he served as Chairman of the department. His research has led to approximately 200 publications. He held visiting professor appointments at a number of universities in several countries and presented countless talks at universities, industrial laboratories, and professional meetings. Mike visited Croatia when he was a graduate student and travelled along the Adriatic Coast. He especially enjoyed his visit to Dubrovnik. Years later he visited Croatia as a world-renown scientist and delivered talk at the Rugjer Bošković Institute in Zagreb. He also participated as an invited speaker at the mathematical chemistry meeting held in Zagreb. Although he was primarily quantum chemist, he was open-minded to all aspects of theoretical chemistry and was equally supporting Croatian quantum chemists, computational chemists and mathematical chemists.

He was an active participant in the Quantum Theory Project, a joint research institute of the departments of Chemistry and Physics at the University of Florida. He was one of the organizers of and a major contributor to the annual Sanibel Symposia. Visitors from Croatia attending the Sanibel Symposia were always heartily welcomed by Mike and helped to get around. His leadership role in the international community of quantum chemists is reflected by his editorship of *Advances in Quantum Chemistry*, his associate editorship of *International Journal of Quantum Chemistry* and his membership on several editorial boards. He was for ten years the member of the Advisory Board of *Croatica Chemica Acta* (CCA) and was very helpful reviewer for many manuscripts submitted to CCA from the wide area of quantum chemistry. The ZINDO software program written by him and his students is used throughout the world for instruction and research. In 1998 he became the first member of the University of Florida chemistry department to be promoted to the rank of Distinguished Professor. Mike will be long remembered for his boundless energy and positive attitude to almost every situation. As he was wont to say, »We can do that!«

*John R. Sabin
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