

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Regents Communication

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Report of Faculty Death

Action Requested: Adoption of Memorial Statement

The Regents of the University of Michigan acknowledge with profound sadness the death of **Richard D. Sacks**, professor of chemistry in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and professor of atmospheric, oceanic and space sciences, College of Engineering. Professor Sacks died on February 11, 2006, after a courageous battle with cancer. He was 63.

Professor Sacks received his B.S. degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1965 and his Ph.D. degree in analytical chemistry from the University of Wisconsin in 1969. He began his career as an assistant professor in Ann Arbor that same year and was promoted to associate professor in 1974 and professor in 1979. He served the chemistry department as associate chair for graduate studies from 1987-1992.

During his 37 years in the chemistry department, Professor Sacks was a truly outstanding educator. He taught both undergraduate and graduate students the principles of modern analytical chemistry and instrumentation, and he was a driving force in modernizing the analytical chemistry curriculum. He developed completely new courses on chemical instrumentation at the undergraduate level and, at the graduate level, he introduced courses on electronic measurements and microcomputer control of analytical instruments, as well as modern separations methods. He served as mentor to more than 35 Ph.D. students who have gone on to distinguished careers in academia, industry, and government laboratories.

Professor Sacks was internationally recognized for his pioneering work on analytical instrumentation. During the early part of his career, his research focused on novel atomic emission spectroscopic methods, including direct solid-sample elemental analysis. In the 1970s, he developed exploding thin film platforms for solids analysis that combined simplicity of sample introduction with unprecedented low detection limits. In the mid-1980s, he turned his attention to innovative approaches to high-speed gas chromatographic separations of complex mixtures of volatile organic compounds. His methodologies reduced measurement times for complex mixtures almost 100-fold and attracted great academic and industrial interest. This work eventually led Professor Sacks and several of his students to form a spin-off company, Chromatofast, Inc., that commercialized instrumentation invented in Sacks' laboratory. In recent years he helped lead efforts at the University to create wireless micro-analytical systems for environmental, homeland security, and deep-space applications. During his career, Professor Sacks and his coworkers published more than 150 research papers on these topics and presented their findings at scientific conferences all over the world.

As we mourn the loss of our beloved colleague, we also extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife, Kristine, and his daughter, Jenny.

Requested by:

Sally J. Churchill
Vice President and Secretary of the University

March 2006