



SoFlacs



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South Florida Section American Chemical Society

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Virtual Celebration of the Chemistry Life of



Ronald E. Block, PhD

Chair, Department of Biochemistry
Nova Southeastern University

Friday, April 9, 6:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://nova.zoom.us/j/94397831595?pwd=MW1XRy84VnhnZkxaTW4rNW1SazZzQT09>

Dr. Ronald E. Block, Professor and Chair of the Biochemistry Department at Nova Southeastern University, and past SoFL-ACS chair in 1999, died unexpectedly on March 26, 2021. Dr. Block received his B.S. in Chemistry from the College of Charleston, M.S. and Ph.D. in Chemistry from Clemson University, and two years as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Florida. He taught medical biochemistry courses for various health professions colleges over the past 25 years at NSU, including the College of Pharmacy, College of Optometry, College of Dental Medicine and as Professor of Biomedical Sciences in both the NSU Dr. Kiran C. Patel Colleges of Allopathic Medicine (NSU MD) and NSU Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM). Before joining NSU in 1994 he had an interim appointment as Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Florida where he taught pre-medical students. He was also a Research Scientist at Papanicolaou Cancer Research Institute (now part of the University of Miami), where he rose to the rank of Senior Scientist and 10 years as an adjunct member of the UM Biochemistry and Chemistry Departments, two years as an adjunct member of the UM Department of Neurology. He was a Research Scientist and MRI Physicist in the Radiology Department at Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach for eight years. He also had a sabbatical at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Health Effects Research Laboratory.

Professor Block took over as the Chair of the NSU Biochemistry Department in 1999, serving tirelessly until the last minute. He had to constantly adjust to the ever-changing NSU programmatic demands and needs. He was involved in coordinating and teaching many programs and taught hard core biochemical principles to the students of Osteopathic Medicine, Dental Medicine, Post Graduate Dental Medicine, Optometry, Pharmacy and Undergraduate honor students of Pre-optometry program, and MD students of the College of Allopathic Medicine. With the satellite campuses in West Palm Beach, Porto Rico, and recently at Clearwater, in total he would have taught thousands of students. Amidst all the administrative and teaching business, Ron managed to ponder on the enzymes such as myeloperoxidase that can be characterized by NMR. He a principal investigator on National Institutes of Health (NIH) R01 grants and also served as a member of a NIH Study Section for three years, a site visitor for 12 years, and was a member of a Contract Review Team for the National Cancer Institute.

His strongest affinity and expertise on the NMR resulted in publications relevant to biomedical fields. The field of Medical MRI is key to many diagnostics of human diseases. He was the nicest colleague not just to the people of outside but most surely to his own department faculties. His kindness, nicety, dedication, and due diligence and running the department with least of glitches possible, was the hallmark of his Chairmanship. This was amidst the ever changing and constant revamping, in terms of program, staff help, needs etc., which makes his contributions a monumental one. Biochemistry is one such fields that requires constant updating with information and knowledge. I remember in one such faculty lunches he would talk about the thyroid hormone type T2. As abnormal it might have sounded for the non-biochemists who are way too familiar with the common forms of T3 and T4, the existence of T2 was obscure. Later, they know that such a T2 form exists in brain and may even have physiological significance. This goes to show that up until the last minute he was trying to update his knowledge with the pace and speed of exploding modern knowledge.

As a long-standing ACS member, he chaired the Miami Subsection in 1979 and chaired the South Florida Section in 1999; he was the member of executive committee for three years. During his term Dr. Block along with Dr. Vic Shanbhag and Dr. Skip Pomeroy initiated the Forensic Sciences Conference. Countless numbers of volunteering hours in planning, executing, and organizing it for multiple years put the Forensic Sciences Program up in the forefront of the South Florida Section. This sparked the interest in the affiliated universities such as Florida International University to start the Bachelor of Science program in Forensic Sciences.

Professor Block was predeceased by his wife Patricia of more than 52 years of marriage and is survived by daughters Alison and Kristin along with grandchildren. His body might depart from his worldly life but his legacy and the spirit that he has left behind will stay forever. Let his pure mind be kept nicely for generations to come to be remembered and role modelled.

A eulogy note from, K.V. Venkatachalam, Ph.D., Professor of Biochemistry, College of Allopathic Medicine, NSU-MD, Ft. Lauderdale, FL-33328