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NEWS | OCTOBER 8, 2003

Engineering

Former long-time professor dies

Stephen Underwood began his career here 27 years ago and stopped teaching in 2002.

By Amber Tafoya
The Shorthorn news editor

Former computer science and engineering professor Stephen Underwood died from pancreatic cancer Saturday. He was 67.

Dr. Underwood began his career at the university as a professor in the Computer Science and Engineering Department in 1975. He stopped teaching last year.

Underwood found his passion in engineering through his father, his widow said.

They shared an interest in Ham radio and electronics, said Carole Underwood of Arlington. His father was a medical doctor who wanted to be an engineer, and Underwood was an electrical engineer who wanted to be a doctor.

Underwood retired from the university in 1991. In 1994, he continued research projects here, funded by the Texas Department of Transportation, until 2002. He contributed to research projects that helped change how road conditions are measured for safety purposes by developing systems that use laser scanners.

Roger Walker, computer science and engineering professor, said he hired Underwood in 1975 because he considered him a circuitry wizard.

"He was pretty much a genius in hardware, extremely well-liked and a very warm individual we will all certainly miss," the former friend and colleague said.

Walker said Underwood was part of the original Computer Science and Engineering team that helped set the program apart from engineering.

"He helped formulate the department and helped in his progression to where we are today," he said.

As much as Underwood worked hard to help expand the program, though, his wife said he had another passion — racing sailboats.

His great-great-grandfather, after all, was an English sea captain.

"It took him six years to get his Ph.D. in Austin because he went racing every weekend," she said.

But once he moved to Arlington, he concentrated on his relationship with her and his work, she said, and forgot about sailing for a while. Two years ago, though, he bought a boat and joined the Arlington Yacht Club.

"Maybe it's in his blood, like engineering was," she said.

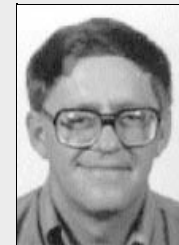
Underwood was born and grew up in Lincoln, Neb., and received a bachelor's of science degree at the University of Nebraska. He went on to receive his master's degree at Southern Methodist University in Dallas and a doctorate in engineering at UT-Austin. He never had children but is survived by his brother Warren Underwood of Boulder, Colo.

Memorial Service

When: 7 p.m.
Thursday

Where: Unity Church
of Arlington, 3325
South Bowen Road

**Donations to the
Stephen A.
Underwood Memorial
Scholarship fund** can
be sent to P.O. Box
19019, Arlington,
Texas, 76019. Funds
will go to engineering
students.



Stephen Underwood,
a former computer
science and
engineering professor,
died Saturday of
cancer.



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