It is with deep sadness that we report the passing of our wonderful colleague Professor Thomas Schleich. Born in 1938 and originally from Staten Island, New York, Tom received his bachelor's degree from Cornell University and his Ph.D. from Rockefeller University. After graduate school, he moved to Dartmouth University and then the University of Oregon, where he pursued postdoctoral research in the laboratory of Professor Peter von Hippel, specializing in biophysical chemistry.

Tom joined the UCSC faculty in 1969 and initiated a groundbreaking research program focused on the application of nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) approaches for studying protein structure and dynamics. As his research matured, Tom narrowed his attention to the unique proteins of the eye lens, which are remarkably dense in concentration yet avoid crystallization or aggregation. Tom pioneered a technique known as off-resonance rotating-frame relaxation measurements for determining how eye lens proteins move and tumble in their natural environment. In turn, these elegant approaches provided deep molecular insights into vision processes and how such processes fail in conditions such as cataracts. As a testament to the importance of his research, Tom maintained years of steady funding from the National Institutes of Health. Moreover, in collaboration with Professor Phillip Crews, Tom raised federal and private funds to establish the first instruments in what is now a thriving UCSC NMR Facility.
Beyond his research, Tom was a generous and selfless mentor to his graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and young chemistry colleagues. As a research advisor, Tom guided a number of outstanding young scientists to their graduate degrees. Several of these students have gone on to highly successful academic careers. As a chemistry colleague, Tom served three separate terms as department chair, guiding the department’s growth and the hiring of outstanding young faculty. While in this leadership role, Tom’s door was always open to any of us seeking advice on negotiating the twists and turns of academic life.

We remember Tom as an incredibly warm, outgoing colleague with an infectious, booming laugh that echoed through the chemistry halls. He exuded a love of science and academics, which set the stage for the collegial, forward-thinking environment that characterizes the current Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. Tom was a true leader. Even after he retired, Tom routinely came back to the department to catch up with current research, meet new faculty, and look over new instrumentation—especially NMR spectrometers! Tom was also an accomplished photographer and printmaker, with works featured in annual and juried shows around the Santa Cruz community. Those of us who knew Tom feel incredibly fortunate to have had him in our lives.

Tom is survived by his wife, Annelies de Kater, and stepdaughter Rachel Truesdell.

https://news.ucsc.edu/2020/02/thomas-schleich-in-memoriam.html

Tom’s photography website: https://www.tomschleich.com/

(see next page for Santa Cruz Sentinel Obituary)
Resident of Scotts Valley, CA

Thomas Walter Schleich died on Saturday February 15, 2020, after suffering a heart attack. Tom was a rugged outdoorsman, a scientist, and a talented photographer with a tremendous love for life.

Tom was born in Allendale, NY. He obtained a B.S. from Cornell University, followed by a Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Rockefeller University. This was followed by Postdoctoral Fellowships at Dartmouth Medical School and the University of Oregon. He joined the Biochemistry Faculty at the University of California, Santa Cruz, in 1969, just a few years after UCSC was founded.

In his professional life, he initiated groundbreaking research focused on the application of nuclear magnetic resonance approaches for studying protein structure and dynamics. He taught chemistry and biochemistry to countless undergraduate and graduate students, as well as postdoctoral fellows. A number of these young scientists also went on to distinguished careers. He chaired the Chemistry Department for many years and served as a mentor to many junior faculty members before his retirement in 2012. His colleagues remember him as a true leader with a warm and outgoing personality, who exuded a love of science and academics.

In the prime of his life, Tom was a mountain climber, backpacker, bicyclist, sailor, skier, kayaker, who loved all aspects of outdoor activities. Later on, he and his wife loved to travel in Tom's beloved "Tiger" camper truck to camp and hike. Tom was a dedicated photographer and printmaker who was always looking to expand his portfolio. He was a member of several photographic and printmaker groups in the greater Bay Area and exhibited widely in group and solo exhibitions. He loved to travel and, with his wife, journeyed extensively to remote places, generating countless images of little traveled locales.
In 1998, he married Annelies de Kater. Two earlier marriages ended in divorce. He is survived by his wife, Annelies, a stepdaughter, Rachel Truesdell of McKinleyville, CA, a stepson, Ruben Baker-de Kater of Northampton, MA, and a sister, Evelyn Gilman of Kingston, NY.

A memorial service to celebrate Tom's life will be held at the UCSC Arboretum indoor meeting hall, 1156 High St., Santa Cruz, CA 95064 on Saturday March 28, 2020 at 1 pm. Please RSVP to tomschleichmemorial@gmail.com

If you would like to send your condolences to Tom's family please visit www.scmemorial.com