

OBITUARY

Charles “Chuck” Sweeley, Jr., April 15, 1930–September 21, 2012

Charles “Chuck” Sweeley, Jr. age 82 passed away on September 21, 2012. He was born and raised in Williamsport, PA. He received a B.S. degree in Chemistry from the University of Pennsylvania in 1952 and the Ph.D. degree in Biochemistry from the University of Illinois in 1955. Following 5 years of postdoctoral work at the National Heart Institute in Bethesda, Dr. Sweeley joined the Department of Biochemistry and Nutrition at the University of Pittsburgh and was appointed professor in 1966. He moved to Michigan State University in 1968 with an appointment as Professor of Biochemistry and remained there until retirement in 1992. He served as Chairperson of the Department of Biochemistry at Michigan State University from 1979 to 1985.

During his academic career, Dr. Sweeley enjoyed two sabbatical leaves, one at Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden and one at the Cancer Center at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Among his several awards were a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1971, an honorary *Doctora honoris causa* degree in Pharmaceutical Sciences from the University of Ghent in 1982, Dreyfus Lecturer at Bucknell University in 1983, and University Distinguished Professor at Michigan State in 1990.

The career of “Chuck”, as many associates called him, was primarily devoted to two areas of research, the development of bioanalytical methods in gas chromatography and mass spectrometry and studies on the biosynthesis, metabolism, and function of sphingolipids. In this field, he was an early pioneer in the development of multiple ion monitoring by GC/MS, publishing the first demonstration of multiple ion monitoring by GC/MS in *Analytical Chemistry* in 1966, 38 (11), 1549–1553. This work was completed prior to the development of computers that we all leverage daily to instantly collect this type of data. He later followed up with a publication describing the use of selected ion monitoring for multicomponent analyses by computer control of accelerating voltage and magnetic field in *Analytical Chemistry* 1975, 47, 2373–2376. The publication detailed the use of a data system for GC-MS, metabolic profiling, and the use of stable isotopes in biochemistry, as his research focus evolved moving from instrumentation to solving the biological problems. In that effort, Chuck published over 200 papers (Sci Finder) starting in 1956 and ending with his final research paper, Characterization of gangliosides by two-dimensional high-performance thin-



layer chromatography, Wiesner, Douglas A.; Sweeley, Charles C. *Analytica Chimica Acta* 1995, 311(1), 57–62. His last publication was in 2010, Reflections on my career in analytical chemistry and biochemistry, Sweeley, Charles C. *Proceedings of the Japan Academy, Series B: Physical and Biological Sciences* 2010, 86(8), 822–836.

Significantly, Chuck had an infectious enthusiasm for his work that stimulated others to get involved. He was also an ardent entrepreneur who worked hard to disseminate his development. In that role he consulted with instrument companies hoping to transition GC and GC/MS ideas from his work to a wider audience. Those companies included LKB, F & M Scientific, Hewlett-Packard, The Upjohn Company, Eli Lilly, Shimadzu, Pierce Chemical, and Meridian Instruments. Dr. Sweeley served on the editorial boards of *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, *Analytical Biochemistry*, *Biomedical Mass Spectrometry*, and the *Biochemistry Journal*. Although he did not attend ASMS, we recognize that Chuck played an important role in development of the technologies that we now utilize as standard tools for “Omics” research.

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