INTERVIEW WITH DR. MUNSON

After 49 years as a "Blue Hen Chemist," Dr. Burnaby Munson can tell you all about how the University has evolved. The one thing that has remained constant, however, is Dr. Munson's dedication to developing personal and meaningful relationships with his students.

Dr. Munson is a beloved chemistry professor and played an integral role in founding the University's Honors Program in the fall of 1976 and later served as director. Dr. Munson is retiring at the end of the academic year. Despite the substantial growth the University has experienced during his time here, he recognized that the Honors Program has consistently provided students with a smaller community on what is otherwise a very large campus.

Although he is unsure exactly what post-retirement life will look like for him, Dr. Munson is excited by the idea of finally returning home to Texas after 50 years. Though adjusting to the weather in Texas will be challenging after nearly 50 years of northeastern winters, Dr. Munson is excited to return to the place where he grew up. And if that means adjusting back to Texas' four seasons, which he describes as, "almost summer, summer, still summer, and Christmas," then let's up for the challenge.

While Dr. Munson's legacy will live on at UD through the Honors Program and the Munson Fellow peer mentor program, he hopes that he is remembered not just on an institutional level but on a personal level by all of the students with whom he has had the pleasure of interacting through the years.

"My experience at the University of Delaware wouldn't have been the same without Dr. Munson. I still remember visiting at Delaware Discovery Days and seeing him at the Chemistry table, dipping Oreos in liquid nitrogen.

Life at UD with Dr. Munson was an adventure. Freshmen year, we were never without food. Between him providing smarties and gummy bears during quizzes and tests to his study breaks on Wednesdays where he'd convince freshmen to eat habañeros and watch what unfolded, it's safe to say no one ever went hungry around him. Dr. Munson also invited the Chemistry, Biochemistry, and Chemistry Education students to his house every fall and spring for a barbecue. It was here that I ate my first burger and I have to say, it's still the best burger I've ever had.

Dr. Munson even invited students over to his house on Halloween to sit, eat candy, and just talk. He always joined us in dressing up in costume, and one year was a safety conscious Dementor!

Dr. Munson has been an integral part of my UD experience. Without him, I'm not sure my four years would have been as fun. He has always looked out for his students and stays in touch with the alumni.

Dr. Munson, thank you for everything. Best wishes for you in all your future endeavors.'’

— Colleen McClatchy '14

""If you don't know him as the man who brings gummy bears to freshmen honors students every Wednesday night, you'll know him as the man who has a name tag stuck to his forehead. I have very fond memories with Dr. Munson- from four years of study breaks, to hot pepper eating competitions, BBQs at his house, and freezing cookies with liquid nitrogen. I'm so grateful that he was a part of my UD experience, and I was honored to be in the first group of "Munson" Fellows. The man doesn't even like gummy bears, but he dedicated years to bringing sweetness (and also some spiciness) to brighten the long nights of freshmen honors students. I can't thank him enough for everything he has done and given to the UD community, and I wish him all the best in his retirement! Future chemistry and honors students will be missing out."

— Jessica Applebaum '14
MUNSON’S TOP 10:

1. Favorite Study Break memories: Thea’s “Half鬧to的 Pepper Eating Competitions,” which was recorded on another student’s cell phone. He also vividly remembers an instance where a student dipped cookies into onion dip, which he never quite understood. He once tried to tempt students who got up suds for Lent with Hawaiian Punch, only to later realize that Hawaiian Punch was not in the “carbonated beverage” category.

2. Favorite classroom memory: Taking one of his chemistry lab classes to Saragasso Springs during the off-season of ’95. Back then, he had fewer students and had the opportunity to get to know them better.

3. Favorite element on the periodic table: Copper, because there are lots of lab experiments that you can perform to get to know them.

4. Favorite snack to serve at Study Breaks: Vanilla with butterscotch sauce since that in recent years students have taken more of a liking to it.

5. Favorite classroom memory: Back then, he had fewer students and had the opportunity to get to know them better.

6. Favorite spot on campus: Spring at UD is marvelous.

7. Greatest thing his students have taught him: To top it off, Professor Munson has mostly joy and excitement about the accomplishments of his students, but he also noticed that in recent years students have taken more of a liking to it.

8. Favorite words to live by: Work hard and have fun.

9. Greatest thing his students have taught him: To top it off, Professor Munson has mostly joy and excitement about the accomplishments of his students, but he also noticed that in recent years students have taken more of a liking to it.

10. Favorite words to live by: Work hard and have fun.