



Dr. Donald J. Plazek

July 17, 2023

World renowned polymer physicist, Dr. Donald J. Plazek, was welcomed into the hands of God on July 17, 2023.

Dr. Plazek, Professor Emeritus of Materials Engineering at the University of Pittsburgh, will be remembered for achieving the highest international honor in the field of rheology, the prestigious Bingham Metal, and for inspiring many generations in the study of the viscoelastic properties of polymers.

Born in Milwaukee in 1931, the son of Marian (Parker) Plazek and Stanley Plazek, Donald had two siblings. Donald was preceded in death by his parents, his brother Stanley Pappas, his sisters-in-law Ruth Pappas and Mary Lou "Mame" Pappas, his wife of 55 years, Patricia (Filkins) Plazek, and his son Joseph Plazek. Donald is survived by his sister Estelle (Stelios) Skoumbouris and his children and their spouses Mary Victoria (Thomas) Taylor, Cynthia Plazek, Caroline Plazek, Daniel (Luisa) Plazek, John Plazek, David (Christina) Plazek, and Anne (Edward) Taylor. He is also survived by 23 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.

While polymer physics was his main passion, Donald was also an avid mushroom hunter, a tropical fish breeder, a zealous tennis player, and a lover of jokes, among other things. His warm heart, gentle manner, and sense of humor will be greatly missed.

Over the course of Donald's professional lifetime, his fields of specialization include the viscoelasticity of polymers and organic glasses, the structure-property relations of polymers, and rheology. He also developed a magnetic suspension creep apparatus. Donald wrote 146 refereed publications in the field of polymers and glass-forming liquids. Donald received a B.S. in Chemistry in 1953 and a Ph.D. in Physical Chemistry in 1957, both from the University of Wisconsin.

Donald's academic experience includes Post-Doctoral research and guidance of graduate students at the University of Wisconsin (1957-1958), Fellow in independent research at Mellon Institute (1958-1967), Associate Professor in the Metallurgical and Materials Engineering Department, University of Pittsburgh (1967-1974), Professor of Materials Science and Engineering Department, University of Pittsburgh (1975-1993), Adjunct Professor in the Chemistry Department Carnegie-Mellon University (1987-1995), Professor Emeritus in the Materials Science and Engineering Department, University of

Pittsburgh (1993-2023).

Donald's awards and distinctions include an American Physical Society Fellowship (1973), a Senior Visiting Research Fellow, Department of Electrical Engineering, University of Glasgow, Scotland (1976-1977), the Sachs-Freeman Associates Distinguished Visiting Researcher at the Naval Research Laboratory (1984), the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Fellow Kyoto University, Uji, Japan (1987-1988), The George Stafford Whitby Award for Innovative and Inspirational Teaching and Research presented by the Rubber Division of the American Chemical Society (1993), The Bingham Medal presented by the Society of Rheology for extensive investigations of the Viscoelastic Behavior of Amorphous Polymers and other glass forming materials (1995), a Fellowship of the American Chemical Society Division of Polymeric Materials: Science and Engineering (2006), the Fernley H. Banbury Award presented by the Rubber Division of the American Chemical Society (2009), the Society of Rheology Fellowship (2015), and the American Chemical Society Seventy-Year Member Award (2022).

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Brother's Brother Foundation or Light of Life Rescue Mission.

Visitation will be Friday, July 21, 2023, from 4:00-8:00 pm at the Lawrence T. Miller Funeral Home, Inc., 460 Lincoln Avenue, Bellevue. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated 11:00 am, Saturday, July 22, 2023, at Regina Coeli Parish, Church of the Assumption, 45 N. Sprague Avenue, Bellevue.