

Vale Jim Wandersee (1946-2014) **

James Howard Wandersee, 67, died on January 24, 2014 at his home in Baton Rouge, LA with his family by his side. Born on December 21, 1946 in New Ulm, Maine where he grew up and was inspired by his teachers to become one himself. He obtained a BS degree at Minnesota State University (1968), MS degree at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (1974) and PhD degree at Marquette University (1978).



Jim contributed to the founding conference of the International History, Philosophy and Science Teaching Group held at Florida State University in 1989. His paper was titled 'On the Value and Use of the History of Science in Teaching Today's Science: Constructing Historical Vignettes'. His research on the efficacy of historical vignettes on student motivation and learning continued for many years, and he was regarded as the 'world authority' on the subject. One of his central research interests was in seeing how the history of science connected with student conceptions and misconceptions in learning; he was a participant in the large and influential 'Misconceptions' conferences of 1983 and 1987 and he worked closely with their organizer, Joseph Novak. Thirty years ago he published a 'landmark', much-cited study on this topic - 'Can the History of Science Help Science Educators Anticipate Students' Misconceptions?', *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* 1985, 23(7), 581-597. Jim was a valued member of the Editorial Committee of *Science & Education* since its inception in 1992 and many have gained from his always careful and informed reviews of their submitted manuscripts.

Jim's career at Louisiana State University began in 1989 as Associate Professor of Science Education and Associate Editor of the *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*. Prior to 1989 Jim taught science at middle school, high school, and college levels for nearly 20 years, specializing in the life sciences. During his nearly 25 years at LSU Jim received numerous awards for outstanding research, teaching, and service, including: 1) *IBC Scientist of the Year Award* by Cambridge University for research in botany education, 2) *Fellow* of the Linnean Society of London in biology, 3) *Fellow* of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 4) *Charles E. Bessey Medal* by the Botanical Society of America, 5) *William W. Craig Outstanding University Educator* by Louisiana Science Teachers Association, and 6) *W.H. LeBlanc Alumni Association Endowed Professorship* in the LSU College of Human Sciences and Education.

Jim enjoyed traveling the world, often with his wife Carol at his side, to seek out botanical gardens, including the northern-most garden above the Arctic Circle in Tromsø,

Norway, to as far south as Melbourne, Australia. Jim's life was filled with his passion for teaching and learning and his work touched the lives of thousands of students over his 44 year career. He worked at LSU until 2012 when his health no longer allowed him to teach, and he retired.

Jim's research excellence and professional dedication are reflected in more than 250 articles, books, and professional presentations, some of which have been translated into seven languages and published in 15 countries.

Perhaps more than anything else Jim loved working with his graduate students as they became part of his community of scholars in the *15° Lab* at LSU and the *EarthScholars*[™] Research Group (co-founded with Renee Clary). Jim's dedication to his students and his commitment to an ongoing research program that focused on graphic representation of scientific knowledge and its effects on science learning are evidenced in the following comments by three of his doctoral students:

Jim was a kind and generous graduate advisor who took the time (in my case, a semester of weekly luncheons) to understand his students' strengths, experiences and natural inclinations before they together finalized research plans. When I see how many graduate students he has advised over the years, I don't know how he managed to make me feel that I was his only one at the time. His mentorship continued after my graduation, and rarely has a month gone by in the 15 years since that he hasn't popped in with a news bit he thinks I'll like. I will forever be grateful to Jim for redirecting my thinking about teaching as what the teacher does to what the learner should be gaining from it. (PBG)

Jim Wandersee was highly respected around the world for his incredible research productivity, immense knowledge, and incredible insight on the state of science education research. Not only did he instill research ethics and professionalism, but he also built a community of scholars. He facilitated multiple networking opportunities each year for doctoral students and past graduates, including the 15 Degree Lab Banquet. The careful mentoring and guidance served former students well, as Jim's students make major research contributions in both national and international forums. (RMC)

Jim was a great role model for emerging scholars because he was an active scholar in two fields—botany and science education. He launched so many graduate students' careers, including mine. He shaped the direction in so many ways and, through me, continues to greatly influence my graduate students' research. I can't begin to express my gratitude to Jim for all he has done for me. His legacy lives on. (EA)

Those of us who knew Jim Wandersee well will miss him greatly, and his work will continue to have a positive impact on science education, through his students, his many publications, and the numerous services he provided to science education throughout the U.S. and abroad. We salute a truly gentle man and a dedicated scholar.

** Authors: Ron Good, Professor Emeritus LSU (1987-2002) and FSU (1968-1986); Renee M. Clary, Associate Professor of Geosciences, Mississippi State University.;

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