

The path of the WSU psychology department took a noticeable turn in 1957 when Ross Stagner arrived on campus as the new departmental chair. More than four decades later, the faculty and students are still reaping the rewards of the changes Dr. Stagner instituted during his tenure at Wayne State.

In recognition of the contributions made by this industrious leader and his wife Margaret, both of whom died in 1997, the department has created the Ross and Margaret Stagner Endowed Memorial Scholarship Fund. "The scholarship will recognize the best all-around graduate student in our department based on academic, research and service performance for a given time period," said Dr. Donald Coscina, current chair of the department. "This is important in two ways: (1) it honors and supports the efforts of such an outstanding student, while (2) honoring the memory of the Stagners, who were instrumental in developing the doctoral program in psychology at Wayne State."

Scholarship recalls visionary chair

Dr. Alan Bass, a recently retired professor and former associate and acting chair in the psychology department, remembered the Stagners as two people who helped fashion the department's foundation. "I came to Wayne State in 1963, and Ross Stagner was the department's chair when I came," he recalled. The two men both specialized in industrial/organizational psychology, he added, "so he was also a role model and a mentor to me."

Many contributions

In particular, Dr. Bass noted, Professor Stagner revolutionized and energized the doctoral program. "Ross was the person who was primarily instrumental in developing, nurturing and expanding the doctoral program in psychology at Wayne State University. [The program] existed prior to him coming, but not in the form that it did afterward and it does now." Before Stagner joined Wayne State, the university had a joint doctoral program between psychology, education, social work and sociology, he explained.

"He was very active in recruiting new faculty and building the psychology department in the way that he felt it should be developed," Bass described. He was especially adamant about creating strong doctoral programs in four areas: industrial/organizational psychology, clinical psychology, experimental psychology and particularly social psychology. "It was really Ross who was instrumental in promoting these doctoral programs and developing and strengthening them."

Psychology professor Sheldon Alexander added, "During the department's greatest period of growth, he was the chair who really shepherded it through the first years of the doctoral program. The department and the university owe a great deal to Ross."

An exemplary reputation

Stagner also had other effects on the department, Bass said. "Because of his eminence and his visibility in the field, he made our department more prominent than it would have been otherwise." He added, "He clearly was an extremely well-known and eminent person in his field. Just his reputation helped attract people to come to the department."

During his years in the psychology field, Stagner served as president of two divisions of the American Psychological Association and was a member of the executive council and board of editors for the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. In addition, he was a Fulbright professor at the University of Rome and at the University of London, and was a fellow in the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He also authored or co-authored five books, wrote many book chapters, published nearly 100 articles and performed guest editorships of journals and yearbooks.

Psychologists frequently cite one of Stagner's books, *Psychology of Personality*, as "marking the beginning of the study of personality from the perspective of science. Four editions of *Psychology of Personality* were published over four decades with each edition being extensively revised," reported Dr. Sheldon Lachman in an obituary for Dr. Stagner, which ran in the April 1998 issue of

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American Psychologist. Lachman, who died shortly after writing the obituary, was also a WSU psychology professor.

Lachman added the following recollections: "Stagner was a warm, friendly, idealistic person, who was well-organized in thought and action. He could cut through the irrelevant and confusing material of complex issues to disclose the essential core. He was a skilled and graceful writer; his writing was lucid, economical and apt, and demonstrated mastery of the material as well as judiciousness in evaluations and conclusions."

Proper recognition

Dr. Bass said the endowed memorial scholarship is a fitting tribute to Stagner. "Knowing what his interests were and what we felt he would have wanted, we felt an appropriate way to memorialize him was to establish this fund."



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Bass, Alexander and Drs. Joel Ager and Eli Saltz formed a committee that proposed and coordinated the scholarship. "There were a number of people who were involved, including people who were not in the department."

One was Stagner's daughter, Dr. Rhea Stagner Das, who has since been very generous in her support of the fund. Following in her father's footsteps, she went on to become a professor of psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Superior.

The fund committee also chose to remember Margaret Stagner in the fund's name. "She was not personally, directly involved with the department like he was. She had different talents and interests and background," Bass said, noting that she wasn't a psychology faculty member. Nonetheless, he noted, her contributions to the department were significant. "When new faculty were hired, she would always invite them to her home for dinner and conversation," he said. "She also was instrumental with Ross in helping to attract

people and develop this department."

Added Dr. Alexander, "Margaret was really a very important person in the development of the psychology department."

After Ross and Margaret Stagner married in 1928, she assisted him with his work, performing such tasks as proofreading, bibliographic citations and index preparation. Soon she began to explore the field of literature. She studied the Russian language, so she could read the original works of great Russian writers, and eventually became an accomplished poet.

Former students, colleagues and friends who would like to remember Ross and Margaret Stagner through the Ross and Margaret Stagner Endowed Memorial Scholarship Fund can send contributions (payable to Wayne State University) to: Director of Development, WSU College of Science, 2155 Old Main, Detroit, Michigan 48202.



Professor Tchen's legacy

Described by his colleagues as a man of vision, Professor Emeritus Tche-Tsing "T.T." Tchen left deep, enduring

imprints on the chemistry department at Wayne State and on the field of chemistry overall.

In memory of Dr. Tchen, who died last August, the department has established the T.T. Tchen Endowed Lecture Fund, which will be used to sponsor an annual biochemistry lecture.

"T.T. played an important role in the evolution of the department from an emerging graduate program to one of international prominence. He was the driving force behind the incorporation of biochemistry into the graduate chemistry curriculum at Wayne State, a far-sighted idea that turned out to be decades ahead of its time," stated the chemistry department's obituary of the respected and well-liked professor.

Tchen's education in chemistry began with a bachelor's degree from Aurora University in his native China. He went on to earn a doctorate in biochemistry from the University of Chicago, then took a postdoctoral position at Harvard before joining Wayne State in 1958 as an associate professor of chemistry. He became a full professor four years later. Tchen remained at WSU until he retired in 1993.

During his career at Wayne State, Tchen developed a record of research accomplishment that included more than 100 publications and 24 book chapters, along with an unbroken record of extramural funding. His skills as a mentor were evident in the 30 doctoral dissertations and 15 master's theses that he directed. He also held numerous editorial board memberships. Other honors included the university's Distinguished Graduate Faculty Award in 1990 and election to the WSU Academy of Scholars, an organization for which he later served as president.

Tchen remained "very active" after he retired, said Louis Romano, chemistry professor and associate chair. He became an avid squash player and world traveler, making trips to India in 1997 and Africa in 1998.

Former students, colleagues and friends who would like to remember Dr. Tchen through the T.T. Tchen Endowed Lecture Fund can send contributions (payable to Wayne State University) to: Professor Louis J. Romano, associate chair, T.T. Tchen Endowment, Wayne State University, 123 Chemistry Building, Detroit, Michigan 48202-3489.