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Chemical Engineering Professor Emeritus Alan Foss died on February 22nd at age 76, after a long illness

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by M. Barnes

Foss was born on September 9, 1929, in Stamford, Connecticut. He earned his B.S. from the Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 1952, and his M.Ch.E. in 1954 and his Ph.D. in 1957, both from the University of Delaware.

He joined the faculty in Chemical Engineering at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1961, after working for five years as a DuPont research engineer. Foss specialized in chemical process control and control system synthesis. He developed mathematical models of chemical reactors and interactive software for training students in process control.

Foss became an associate professor in 1965 and a full professor in 1973. He was Vice Chair of the department from 1967-69, and in 1993 he served as advisor to the student chapter of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers. He was also a senior staff scientist at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory from 1975 until 1994. He was a member of Sigma Xi and Tau Beta Pi.

Foss suffered a stroke in late 1993, but he continued to work on a significant NSF grant in collaboration with George Stephanopoulos of MIT to find new ways to include computation in undergraduate training related to process modeling. He retired in July 1994 under the voluntary early retirement program, but was recalled to active teaching for the 1994-95 academic year.

The Foss family came to North America in 1663 from Norway, and Foss returned to his roots as Research Fellow at

College of Chemistry seminars

the Royal Norwegian Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in Trondheim, Norway in 1969-1970.

Foss always thought of himself as a New Englander, having been born and educated there. He acquired his life-long love of lacrosse as a student at the Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts and coached the sport for many years in California.

Foss is fondly remembered as the editor of the *Gilman Hall Newsletter*, and he produced a special edition of the *Gilman Hall Newsletter* for the fortieth anniversary of the Chemical Engineering in 1987. He resigned as editor in July 1992, when the newsletter was merged with the Department of Chemistry's newsletter into a College of Chemistry publication.

According to a brief autobiography published in the *Gilman Hall Newsletter* in December 1983, Foss told prospective graduate students that "there must be an irrepressible driving force to go into teaching." Teaching was Foss's driving force. After more than two decades on the faculty, he stated, "The greatest challenge is ...our undergraduate students. There, I find that a rather delicate balance is needed in telling, asking, testing, challenging, encouraging, tutoring, correcting, stretching, leading. I am still searching for the right mix."

Foss is survived by his wife of 45 years, Anna Måthå. Foss, of Berkeley and by four children: son Willard (B.S. Chemical Engineering '86, UC Berkeley) of Thousand Oaks, California; daughter Esther Foss (B.A. Architecture '85, UC Berkeley) of Eugene, Oregon; daughter Emese Foss, also of Eugene, Oregon; and daughter Reka Foss (B.A. Landscape Architecture '95, UC Berkeley) of Berkeley.

A memorial service will be held on March 25 at 2 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, 685 14th St, at the corner of Castro Street in downtown Oakland.

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[Alan Foss Autobiography](#) from the *Gilman Hall Newsletter*