

## Resolution of the Retirement of Robert L. Reuss

The faculty of the Department of Geology wish to express our deepest appreciation to Bert Reuss as he retires from a distinguished career of service to Tufts University and its students that has spanned nearly 40 years.

Bert grew up on Long Island, a body of sand left by receding glacial ice sheets, and which is not known for its rock outcrops. He went to college at Ohio Wesleyan University where he tried out several majors before he found geology. Incidentally, if he could have majored in track and field he might have done so, as he was a phenomenal discus thrower. He placed second in the nation in Division 1 during his junior year, and was ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in the country overall. Al Oerter, who was the winner of 4 Olympic gold medals, was ranked number 1. But Bert found that science, in particular the study of Earth and its systems, was just as captivating. He went on to complete his Masters and PhD degrees at the University of Michigan, where his field research took him to the mountains of Colorado. He studied some unusual mineral and rock associations in the high country near Cañon City, and his interest and appreciation for both the aesthetics and systematics of crystallography and mineralogy grew. Bert joined the faculty at Tufts in 1969, and took on the so-called hard rock part of the geology curriculum, teaching the mineralogy and petrology courses.

There are many ways to measure the influence that a professor has had on his or her students. Bert has been a deeply conscientious teacher and mentor, going well above and beyond normal effort to a level that anyone would say was exceptional. Some numbers are telling: 80,000 miles of travel for about 60 field trips, including multi-week excursions out west, and many weekend trips to mineral localities in New England and eastern Canada. The field trips that are most fondly remembered by his students, however, are the 12 extended trips over winter breaks out to Arizona and New Mexico. For 8 of these trips, Bert and as many as 18 students packed up vans and cars and drove across the country, progressively testing the suspensions of the vehicles as they collected minerals and rocks from innumerable localities. Our alumni often cite these extended and exhausting trips as the most memorable and enjoyable time of their undergraduate experience. But consider this: if the students found the trips tiring, imagine how taxing they were for Bert. He not only ensured that the students learned geology in far greater depth than could possibly be provided in a lab setting, but he also looked out for their safety and every imaginable logistical detail, from camping supplies to meals to haggling with motel owners to let 8 students spread out their sleeping bags in one room to save money for them.

Bert's teaching in the classroom is legendary as well. Although he has taught 10 different geology courses and their labs over the years, he is best known for 4 of these courses: *Mineralogy*, *Igneous and Metamorphic Petrology*, *Scanning Electron Microscopy*, and *Geology 1 The Dynamic Earth*. There are two qualities that our alumni have repeatedly noted about Bert's teaching. First, he brings out the best in his students by assuming that they will do well, and he facilitates this by giving them his time and energy in almost limitless quantities. In fact, time – that most precious resource – Bert seems to be able to manufacture! Despite spending hours working with students individually on a Tuesday afternoon, he still is able to prepare perfectly executed class meetings and lab exercises the

next day on Wednesday, having built some model or demonstration the evening before. I can only wonder at how he has been able to get by on 2 or 3 hours of sleep a night for whole semesters.

The second memorable aspect of Bert's courses is the incredible variety of models and demonstrations that provide visual reinforcement of concepts in lectures and labs. He is an accomplished woodworker, and produces a set of 9 wooden blocks cut from African mahogany that illustrate crystal symmetry systems which he gives to each student in his Mineralogy courses. In Geology 1, nearly every lecture has some amazing visual aid. Bert knows that his own style of learning is quite visual, so he has built some type of demonstration for almost every topic covered in the course. The students marvel at his sensitivity to their diverse learning styles, but also at the apparently unlimited time he will devote to teaching them. He encourages them, bolsters their confidence, and provides every support they could need to succeed.

Bert's dedication to the students and to excellence in his courses has been recognized by awards from Tufts students and the University. The Inter-Greek Council of Tufts presented him with The Golden Apple Award in 1993. This year Bert received the Gerald R. Gill Professor of the Year Award, voted by the TCU Senate based on nominations from the student body. And today he is receiving the Seymour Simches Award for Distinguished Teaching and Advising.

Bert has served on 15 university committees and he chaired the Department of Geology for over 13 years. But those are only numbers – it is the quality of the service that is unique. Bert was a caring and careful mentor to us as junior faculty, and offered advice without requiring that we follow it – though things always seemed to work out better when we did! He never cuts corners, never gives any task less than full effort. He has been the wise conscience of the Department, setting the bar high and leading by example. The rest of us find ourselves following suit and trying to match the attention to detail that Bert gives his work. Bert's legacy to the Department includes cultivating a culture of excellence in every effort. "Making do" or "That's good enough" are not phrases you hear from Bert.

Behind the scenes, Bert has had the support, advice, and unconditional love of his wife Dori and their two children, Keri and Eric. The Reuss family is truly part of the Tufts community, as Dori earned her Masters degree here and both of their children received degrees from Tufts. We, and all of our students, thank Dori, Keri, and Eric for sharing Bert with us for nearly 4 decades.

On behalf of the Department of Geology, I request that this resolution be spread on the minutes of the faculty of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering and that a copy be presented to Professor Reuss.