

Resolution on the Death of

Professor James Schmolze

Adopted by the Faculty of Arts, Sciences and Engineering

May, 2006

The Computer Science Department invites the Arts, Sciences and Engineering faculty to join us in remembering our dear friend and colleague James Schmolze Professor of Computer Science, who died of cancer on February 27th, 2006. Jim is survived by his wife Alice Nichols and sons Dustin and Kyle Nichols-Schmolze, as well as brother William Schmolze and his family.

After Jim completed his Ph.D. at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, he first worked at BBN in Cambridge before joining Tufts in 1986 as an Assistant Professor. He was one of the primary catalysts for the newly formed Computer Science Major. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1992. During the years of 2000-2002 he served as department chair of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science.

Throughout his twenty years as a professor at Tufts, he loved conducting research in the field of artificial intelligence, particularly in collaboration with others. Just in his last year, he had papers accepted to journals or refereed conferences with *each* of Alan, Chenggang, Michael, and Tamara, his current and former Ph.D. students. Most recently he was working on the problem of reasoning and planning with incomplete knowledge. He also served his research community in such ways as co-organizing a workshop for the "triple-A I" – American Association of Artificial Intelligence-- or serving on NSF panels

Jim was a truly extraordinary teacher. He covered all of the needed material clearly and carefully, but did so also with animation, energy and passion. That he was a truly outstanding teacher is apparent from the many letters we received from former students upon news of his passing. Here are just a few excerpts:

-- "He was one of the best and more popular professors when I was there, very laid back, patient with students and a great instructor. I will miss him."

--"As an undergraduate, the lively energy and intellectual spirit of his classes felt like junior high and grad school all at once."

--"Prof. Schmolze was a wonderfully enthusiastic and generous teacher."

--"He was a wonderful professor and person, always passionate about his research and an inspiration to his students."

Jim's vision of Tufts was compelling. He saw Tufts as a place that believes passionately in a professoriate that commits fully to research, service, and teaching, that values and

encourages the growth of the whole person, and that is ever open to new ideas. He practiced the highest level of rigor in his work and of fairness in dealing with students and faculty. He embodied an attitude of mutual respect that influenced the way business was done.

His service here at Tufts has taken so many different forms from the early collaboration on growing a computer science program from scratch on upward. He served on the Academic Standing Committees, FRAC, and the Eng. Executive Committee. In 2003 he became a faculty fellow of the University College with a goal to integrate computers and society. It is not what he has done, however, but how he has done it that has made Jim so special. A gentler, more gracious colleague could not be found. Perhaps the best way to understand Jim's contributions are through the words of the students he came in contact with.

One graduate student wrote:

“For me, Jim was the kind of person and the kind of mentor that I want to be some day. This was true a year ago and has not changed with his passing. He is on a very short list of people, many of whom were professors from my undergraduate days at William and Mary, who I've always admired and strived to become one day. I've never been driven to become wealthy or powerful, but instead to become someone that can share the kind of comfort and intellect and guidance that I received while pursuing my educational goals. I think for me Jim exemplified the best of those traits and I can't imagine ever having achieved what I have so far without him.

Another graduate student wrote:

“He was such an intelligent, passionate and gentle human being, someone I've always looked up to in the 11 years I've known him, someone I've wanted to model myself after. There were plenty of times when he could have given up on me, lost patience with my slow progress, but yet he never wavered in his support of my academic pursuit of a PhD. He was the kind of man I always wanted as a dad when growing up.”

We have renamed the Computer Science Prize, the James Schmolze award for excellence in Computer Science. This is an annual award given to the student who best exemplifies excellence in course work and service.

Jim's spirit lives on in this Tufts community, in the department of computer science which to such a large extent he helped build, and with each of us whose life he touched

We ask that this resolution be included in the minutes of the faculty of Arts, Sciences and Engineering, and that copies be sent to Professor Schmolze's widow and children.