

In Memoriam

Jolinda A. Traugh
Professor Emeritus of Biochemistry and Biochemist
UC Riverside
1937 - 2019



Jolinda A. Traugh, Professor Emeritus of Biochemistry and Biochemist at University of California (UC) Riverside, passed away on October 11, 2019. She was born on October 5, 1937 and was 82 years old.

In 1960, Dr. Traugh earned her undergraduate degree from UC Davis becoming one of the first women to graduate from any UC campus with an undergraduate degree in Soil Science. Dr. Traugh later went on to receive her Ph.D. in Bacteriology/Molecular Biology from the UC Los Angeles in 1970. In 1973, she was hired as Assistant Professor of Biochemistry and Biochemist at the UCR, becoming the first woman faculty member in the Biochemistry Department, and one of the first in any of the UCR biological sciences departments. During her time at UCR, Dr. Traugh became Professor of Biochemistry, served as an Associate Dean for the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, and was appointed Chair of the Biochemistry Department.

Dr. Traugh was internationally recognized as an expert on protein kinases and the role they play in regulating protein synthesis. Dr. Traugh is credited with being one of two founders of the protein kinase field and played a defining role, along with 1992 Nobel Prize Laureate Ed Krebs and National Academy of Sciences member Ora Rosen, in discovering fundamental features of protein kinases with respect to the regulation of biological events in cells, particularly in the regulation of cell growth and protein synthesis. Her research contributions have been noted for their rigor and consistency for over 30 years. She had several patents related to this research and has published more than 140 refereed journal articles, review articles, and book chapters.

Of her many accomplishments, Dr. Traugh found great pride in establishing the National Institutes of Health funded “Maximizing Access to Research Careers Undergraduate Student Training in Academic Research” (MARC U-STAR) program at UCR and served as the director for the program. Her vision for the MARC U-STAR program was to provide structured training programs to prepare underrepresented students for doctoral programs in biomedical research fields. She enjoyed interacting with students and encouraged open-door mentoring. Even after her retirement in 2012, Dr. Traugh continued her contributions to UC Riverside with distinction as Professor of Graduate Division serving as Director of the MARC U-STAR program and writing additional research publications.

Over the course of her career, Dr. Traugh had 20 Ph.D. graduates, post-doctoral trainees from all over the world, and was a mentor to a countless number of students and colleagues. Those that worked with Dr. Traugh describe her as being an inspiration for their careers, a superb mentor who transmitted her love for protein kinases, a person with a wonderful sense of humor, and one who undertook challenges with tremendous grace and wisdom.

Dr. Traugh taught a variety of courses, including Advanced Biochemistry Laboratory, Advanced Analysis of Biochemical Methods, and Signal Transduction and Biochemical Regulation. She particularly enjoyed teaching Signal Transduction and Biochemical Regulation because the subject matter was an extension of her own research.

Outside of her professional life, Dr. Traugh had a love for horses. She had horses all of her adult life and bred Hanoverian sport horses. She enjoyed traveling and collaborating with scientists from all over the world.

Dr. Traugh is survived by her daughter Sundi Prechtl. This memorial was prepared by Joann Young in the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences Office, with edits by Professor Bahman Anvari.