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A Mentor's Thoughts

The thing I remember best about Bob is this: I always felt more alive when I was in his presence. It was a very noticeable thing, starting when he was a post-doc in our group, and the feeling only increased as the years passed. I think it was because he, himself, lived life so fully and so enthusiastically that it made those around him more aware of life's possibilities.

From the moment Bob arrived in Boulder, it was clear that he was born to be a Boulderite. He loved the outdoors: the climbing, the hiking, the skiing. And he looked the part, sporting plenty of hair and usually wearing jeans and boots. I especially remember once when he returned from a rock-climbing expedition with Veronica's sister Ann-Marie. As Ann-Marie tells the story, she noticed some men watching them and naturally assumed they were admiring her. But no, it was Bob they were watching and they had picked him out as a possible star in a Coors Beer commercial—to illustrate that he-men drink Coors Beer (actually, Bob had much better taste in beer than that!). Off he went for a weekend of filming in Rocky Mountain National Park. In the end he didn't appear in the final, brief clip, but he provided all the setup and rigging for the climb.

Although he knew little about the details of gas phase ion chemistry when he arrived in Boulder, Bob had a terrific background in physical organic chemistry and especially in thermochemistry from his grad-

uate work at Yale with Ken Wiberg. He did a lot to heighten our awareness of the central role thermochemistry was playing in our work, but he was never more excited than when he was just throwing things in the flowing afterglow instrument to see what would happen. Of course something usually did happen, at least in his hands, and then he would summon the group to a lunch-time meeting to hash out an explanation and to plan what to do next. We are still working on some of the reactions Bob discovered. I sense that things continued like that at Purdue; at least I never called there and found him in his office. I always had to be transferred to his lab.

We continued to see a lot of Bob after he left Boulder for West Lafayette, and I never noticed any lessening in his enthusiasm, either for chemistry or for life in general, despite his illness. If anything it only seemed to increase his desire to experience everything they had to offer. The students and post-docs of his whom I know all seem to have been infected with these same great attitudes, so that he leaves a legacy of excellent gas-phase ion chemists to carry on. Nevertheless, every conference seems a little less interesting in his absence.

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