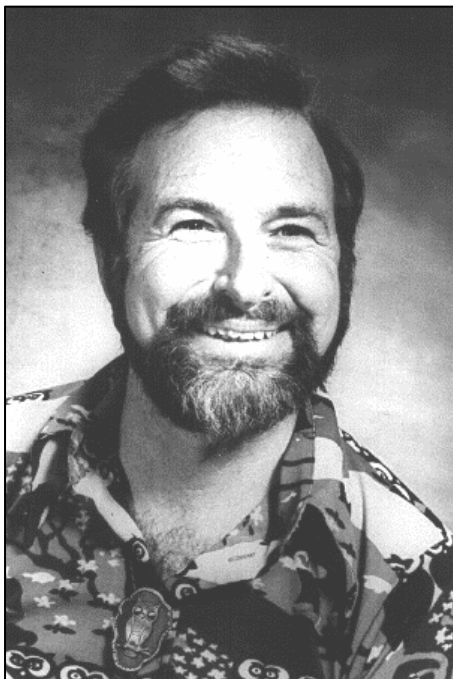


George B. Kauffman (1930– 2020)



George B. Kauffman, Professor of Chemistry at California State University, Fresno (CSUF) since 1956, was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on September 4, 1930. He was a Science Talent Search winner in 1948, and received his B.A. with honors in chemistry from the University of Pennsylvania (1951) and his Ph.D. from the University of Florida (1956). He has been a Research Participant at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (1955), an Instructor in Chemistry at the University of Texas (1955–1956), and a Research Chemist for the Humble Oil and Refining Company (1955) and the General Electric Company (1957, 1959). Long active in both local and national American Chemical Society (ACS) affairs, he has been chairman (1969–1970), symposium chairman (1966, 1968, 1970), and program chairman (1967–1969) of the ACS Division of the History of Chemistry. He was editor of the History of Chemistry Series, ACS Audio courses (1975–1981). He has presented more than a hundred lectures at local, national, and international meetings and symposia.

Kauffman is the author of 17 books and more than 2,050 papers, reviews, and encyclopedia articles on chemical education, chemistry, and the history of science, a number of which have been translated into foreign languages. In 1969 the USSR Academy of Sciences invited him to contribute two articles on relations between Mendeleev and American chemists to a volume celebrating the centenary of the periodic system. In 1971 he was invited to present a paper and preside at the 13th International Congress on the History of Science in Moscow. On both occasions he was the only Western scientist to be so honored. In 1972 he was named Director of the CSUF National Science Foundation Undergraduate Research Participation Program. In 1973 he was one of two faculty members chosen from among 16,000 in the 19-campus California State University System to be named Outstanding Professor in recognition of his "creative teaching and scholarly endeavor."

Kauffman has been a Contributing Editor of the *Journal of College Science Teaching*, *The Hexagon*, *Journal of Chemical Education*, *Today's Chemist*, *The Chemical Intelligencer*, *Today's Chemist at Work*, *Chemical Heritage*, *The Chemical Educator*, *Chem 13 News*, *Industrial Chemist* and the *CSUF Navigator*. In 1976 he was one of four national winners of the Manufacturing Chemists' Association Catalyst Award for Excellence in College Chemistry Teaching. He has been awarded all three of the N.S. Kurnakov Institute of General & Inorganic Chemistry, USSR Academy of Sciences medals—the Chugaev (1976), Kurnakov (1990), and Chernyaev Medals (1991). He was a member of the editorial board of *Polyhedron* and editor of this journal's quarterly feature "Historical Sketches" (1982–1985).

Kauffman made a chemical-historical study of Werner's coordination theory under a National Science Foundation grant at the Universität Zürich (1963–1964). He spent 1983 in Europe under grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and Svenska Institutet (the Swedish Institute) gathering material for his research project, "A Humanist Genius as Amateur Scientist: August Strindberg's Chemical and Alchemical Studies and Their Influence on His Literary and Dramatic Productions." He received the Exceptional Merit Service Award (1984) and the Meritorious Performance and Professional Promise Award of the California State University System (1986 and 1988). He was awarded the Marc-Auguste Pictet Medal of the Société de

Physique et d'Histoire Naturelle de Genève (1992) and the George C. Pimentel Award in Chemical Education (1993).

In 1994 Kauffman became the first recipient of the President's Medal of Distinction, "the highest non-degree presented by CSUF to citizens of the region, state or nation whose contribution in the area of professional achievements or public service are of national or international significance, or represent a contribution of great significance to the university." He presented the introductory plenary lecture at the 17th Conference on Coordination Chemistry ("Coordination Chemistry at the Turn of the Century"), Smolenice Castle, Slovakia, June 7-11, 1999 and an invited paper at the Third International Conference on the History of Chemistry and Chemical Industry, Budapest, Hungary, July 2-4, 1999. In 2000 he received the ACS Award for Research at an Undergraduate Institution. On the occasion of his 70th birthday the Institute for the History of Science & Technology, Russian Academy of Sciences, honored him with a laudatory decree for his contributions to chemistry and the history of chemistry. In 2002 he was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), received the American Chemical Society's Helen M. Free Award for Public Outreach, and was honored by the ACS for his 50 years of service. His invited article, "Coordination Chemistry at the Turn of the Century," appeared in a special issue of the *Journal of the Indian Chemical Society* (June 2003).

Kauffman is the author or editor of such important books as *Alfred Werner—Founder of Coordination Chemistry* (1966), *Werner Centennial* (Advances in Chemistry Series Number 62, 1967); *Classics in Coordination Chemistry I. The Selected Papers of Alfred Werner* (1968), *II. Selected Papers 1798–1899* (1976), *III. Twentieth Century Papers 1904–1935* (1978); *Teaching in the History of Chemistry* (1971); and *Coordination Chemistry: A Century of Progress* (ACS Symposium Series Number 565, 1994).

In 1978 George Kauffman received the Dexter Award for extensive contributions including published papers and books, organization of symposia, and particularly for his studies on Alfred Werner and the history of coordination compounds.

George Kauffman died on May 2, 2020.

Sources

Autobiographical material provided by George B. Kauffman (Archives, American Chemical Society Division of the History of Chemistry, Chemical Heritage Foundation, Philadelphia PA).

Aaron J. Ihde, *A Quarter Century of Dexter Awards*, 1981, unpublished manuscript. Copy in the University of Pennsylvania Library, QD21 .Q8 1981a; an abridged version can be found in *Bulletin for the History of Chemistry* 4 (1989): 23–24.

Photo courtesy of the Oesper Collections: University of Cincinnati.