

Biology department to honor Larry Hinck

BY ALDEMARO ROMERO

SPECIAL TO THE SUN

With the purpose of honoring emeritus professor Larry Hinck and to better serve students, the Department of Biological Sciences of Arkansas State University will renovate the Microbiology lab in its Jonesboro campus. A plaque will be placed in the lab to recognize all his years of service to ASU.

Dr. Hinck was born Dec. 12, 1940, in Cape Girardeau, Mo. His upbringing was always close to nature. He enjoyed hunting and fishing in the hills and bottom lands of southeast Missouri and Southern Illinois. He obtained his bachelor's degree in zoology with a minor in botany from Southeast Missouri State University. He went on to receive his master's degree in medical microbiology from the University of Missouri-Columbia after switching from the medical program. There he was awarded a NASA Fellowship to study sterilization using ethylene oxide. This is a colorless flammable gas with a faintly sweet odor. In addition to being used for sterilization, it is also important to the chemical industry for the production of ethylene glycol antifreeze.

Hinck later received his doctorate in parasitology and microbiology from the University of Oklahoma School of Health in Oklahoma City. At the University of Oklahoma he taught parasitology to medical technology students and parasitology labs to second-year medical students.

When the circumstances are right ...

The way Hinck ended up in Jonesboro was unusual. With a microbiology interview prearranged at the University of Tennessee, he decided to stop at Jonesboro, too. It was a simple stop on the way from Oklahoma, and ASU had a position for teaching both microbiology and parasitology. That stop brought a surprising opportunity to teach not only the above courses but immunology as well. This offer brought promise for pursuing his personal research interests and teaching his three favorite courses.

"I said yes and never looked back. It was a wise choice, indeed, finding students who appreciated our teaching efforts and a departmental camaraderie that made academia fun," Hinck said. "As a former medical student myself, I guess you'd say the 'icing on the cake' came in joining ASU professor Bill Byrd in advising pre-professional students. For Bill and myself and professor Larry Olson, who later joined the team, those untold hours of counseling, drying tears for that occasional C or B and allaying the fears of non-acceptance have been greatly rewarded."

To Hinck, real gratification came from proudly watching ASU graduates refine their skills and grow their reputations over the years.

"Teaching at ASU was always motivating with plenty of bright students to keep you on your toes and the academic freedom that allowed for high expectations while still leaving room for some fun. With a diversity of students ranging from nursing and med-tech through wildlife management and the many pre-health professions, teaching was forever interesting," Hinck said.

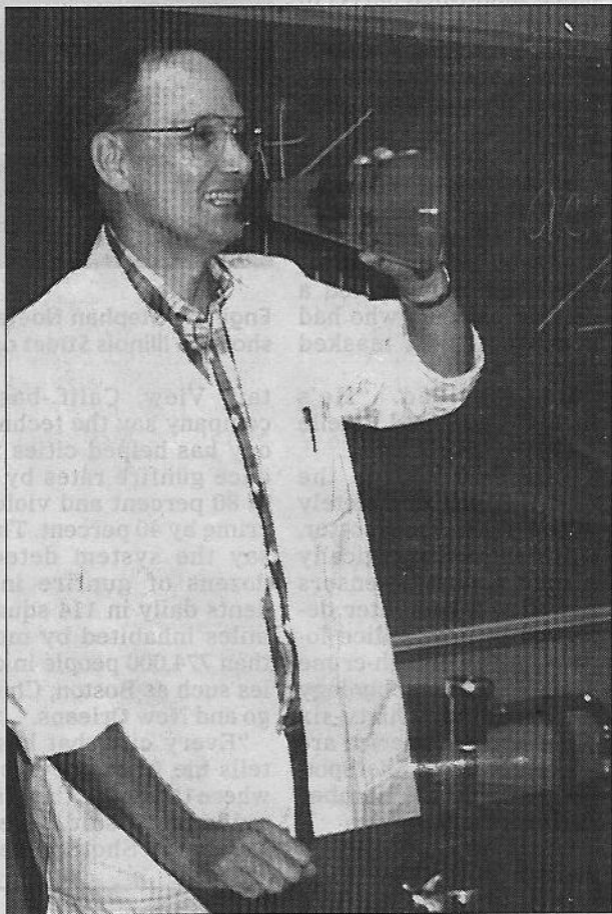
Hinck taught at ASU from 1969 until 2001. In retirement, he views his 32 years at ASU as very good ones.

His wife Carol received both master's and specialist's degrees from ASU. His two daughters, Laura and Cheryl, received baccalaureate degrees from ASU with one continuing to complete her master's degree.

Today Hinck devotes his energy to social activities. For example, he is the Sight and Hearing Committee Chairman for University Heights Lions Club. He is also a member of the Case Services Committee of the Midsouth Lions Sight and Hearing Service, a member of the Board of Directors for the Helping Neighbors Food Pantry and a lector at St. Mark's Episcopal Church. And yes, he is still fishing while gardening, traveling and grandparenting.

For more information contact the ASU Department of Biological Sciences at biology@astate.edu.

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ASU Department of Biological Sciences

Dr. Larry Hinck teaches at Arkansas State University in this undated photo.