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## \$1.7 Million Gift from Longtime Chemistry Professor will Endow Chemistry, Pre-Med Scholarships at UD

University of Dayton

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Contact: Heather Maurer  
Maurer@udayton.edu  
Or Pam Huber  
Huber@udayton.edu

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## NEWS RELEASE

### **\$1.7 MILLION GIFT FROM LONGTIME CHEMISTRY PROFESSOR WILL ENDOW CHEMISTRY, PRE-MED SCHOLARSHIPS AT UD**

DAYTON, Ohio — In 1976 when her 6-year-old daughter's school was cancelled because of bad weather, Suzanne Columbus had no other choice but to bring her daughter, Liz, to her organic chemistry class.

But Carl I. Michaelis, the UD chemistry professor who taught Columbus' organic chemistry class, did not mind. He welcomed Liz to class and conducted a special experiment, which smelled like spearmint. Not only was the youngster intrigued, but the rest of the class also gained a better understanding of organic chemistry.

"He had a very unique ability to take very difficult concepts and explain them," said Columbus, laboratory manager at Kettering Medical Center who earned undergraduate degrees from UD in elementary education in 1968 and medical technology in 1978. "He really gave you a solid base to build upon. You had to put effort into it. But if you showed interest, he would take time with you."

"He loved the University of Dayton," said Michaelis' brother, Walter. "He particularly identified and bonded with people in the chemistry department."

Michaelis, who died Sept. 12, 2000, loved the University so much that he left a \$1.7 million gift to the University from his estate. The gift will endow the Carl I. Michaelis Scholarship Fund, which is for junior and senior chemistry and pre-medicine majors.

Hundreds of doctors and pharmacists in the Dayton area were Michaelis' students and members of the pre-med honor society, which he moderated. Michaelis instigated a switch in 1962 from the local honor society Sigma Delta Pi to the national honor society Alpha Epsilon Delta and remained adviser to the group until his retirement in 1988.

Richard Reiling, M.D., '63, was the first president of Alpha Epsilon Delta after Michaelis initiated the switch. After graduating from UD, he continued his medical school education at Harvard University. "He was absolutely superb. He respected us immensely," said Reiling, who started practicing in Dayton as a surgeon in 1973 and now is vice president of

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Grant/Riverside Methodist Hospitals in Columbus, Ohio. "He understood our concerns. He was a great teacher."

His brother, Walter Reiling Jr., M.D., '61, agreed with him. "Chemistry was a tough subject. But it was a joy to go to class," said Reiling, who also continued his medical school education at Harvard University and began his career as a surgeon in Dayton in 1970. "He is the sort of professor you always remember not only as a teacher but as a friend."

Michaelis also was close to his colleagues in the chemistry department, especially chemistry professors Al Fratini, Larry Fox and Brother John Lucier, S.M. They recall Michaelis' interest in his students.

"He loved students, and they loved him," said Lucier, who is a distinguished service professor in chemistry. "For a professor, that's the greatest testimony."

Michaelis' love for students set him apart, Fratini explained. "His office was like Grand Central Station in terms of the activity," said Fratini, who was astounded by Michaelis' large gift to the University. "He was frugal. He just never spent anything on himself."

Fox's visit to Michaelis' gravesite in Topeka, Kan., touched Walter Michaelis. "We had no idea that Carl's role was as significant at the University of Dayton and in the lives of the people of the University of Dayton as it was," Walter Michaelis said. "Carl was a fellow that didn't particularly trumpet his accomplishments. He just did his job."

Michaelis joined the chemistry department at UD in 1954. He received recognition as Professor of the Year in 1963 and was runner-up for the Alumni Outstanding Faculty Award that year. He was nominated for Distinguished Service Professor in 1987 and was appointed professor emeritus in 1988.

In addition to carrying a full teaching workload, he advised pre-med and pre dental students at UD for 36 years. He was the faculty adviser for the UD student affiliate of the American Chemical Society for 33 years. He also provided guidance to many chemistry majors.

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For media interviews, contact **Walter Michaelis** in Kansas at (785) 272-3893, **Al Fratini** at (937) 229-2849, **Larry Fox** at (937) 229-4369, and **Brother John Lucier, S.M.**, at (937) 229-2710. **Suzanne Columbus** can be reached at (937) 298-4331, ext. 55041; **Walter Reiling Jr.** can be reached at (937) 433-3939; and **Richard Reiling** can be reached at (614) 566-5000.