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Jack H. Stocker, 85, emeritus professor of chemistry at the University of New Orleans (UNO), died of a stroke on July 8.

Born in Detroit, Stocker received a bachelor's degree from Olivet College, in Michigan, and a master's degree from Indiana University, Bloomington. He then earned a doctorate in organic chemistry from Tulane University, in New Orleans, in 1955.

In 1958, he became one of the first chemistry professors at UNO, which was then called Louisiana State University, in New Orleans. At UNO, he was instrumental in establishing the university's graduate programs and research efforts. He retired from teaching in 1990 but remained active at the university. Stocker was a founding member of the Friends of UNO and a faculty sponsor of UNO's student science fiction/fantasy club, "Survivors of the Big Bang."

Stocker's home, along with his personal library of more than 20,000 science fiction books, was destroyed in Hurricane Katrina (C&EN, Nov. 21, 2005, page 14). He was editor of "Chemistry and Science Fiction," which was published by ACS in 1998.

An emeritus member, Stocker joined the society in 1944. At the time of his death, he was a member of the ACS Council, a position he had held for many years.

Survivors include sons Daniel and David and grandson Asher.

UNO chemistry professor Jack H. Stocker dies

By Times-Picayune Staff

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Jack H. Stocker, an emeritus professor of chemistry at the University of New Orleans and one of the school's founding faculty members, died of a stroke July 8. He was 85.

Jack H. Stocker had a long and distinguished career in the UNO chemistry department. A pioneer of UNO's chemistry faculty, Mr. Stocker was instrumental in developing research efforts and graduate education programs during a 30-year career at the university that began in 1958 when the college was called Louisiana State University of New Orleans. He was chairman of the Louisiana section of the American Chemical Society at the college until his death.

Mr. Stocker was born May 3, 1924, in Detroit. He received a bachelor's degree from Olivet College in Michigan and a master's degree from the University of Indiana before earning a doctorate from Tulane University in 1955 with a specialization in organic chemistry

An avid reader of science fiction, Mr. Stocker had accumulated a personal library of more than 50,000 books and recordings since the late 1930s, but his collection was lost in Hurricane Katrina. A chronicle of his extensive library was published in *Chemistry and Engineering News*. Friends and colleagues said he always tried to share his collection of books with others and was an active member in the New Orleans Public Library and Jefferson Parish Library organizations. He published his own book, "Chemistry and Science Fiction," in 1998.

"Dr. Stocker took pleasure in speaking to a variety of interesting aspects of chemical literature," said his longtime friend Ray Sweany, also a professor of chemistry at UNO. "He retired from teaching in 1990 but didn't fully retire until his death."

In addition to teaching and collecting literature, Mr. Stocker was a founding member of the Friends of UNO and a faculty sponsor of UNO's student science fiction/fantasy club, *Survivors of the Big Bang*. He was also a member of the *Krewe of Endymion* and rode in the early 1980s.

"It's almost impossible to walk into any medical establishment in New Orleans and not be able to find someone who had him as an adviser or a professor in organic chemistry, " said his son, Daniel. "Anytime we went to the doctor, people would come up to say hello to him and pay their respects to him. He left a mark on an entire generation of medical professionals in this area."

The Hexagon – Fall 2009

Dr. Jack H. Stocker, Alpha Tau 1951

UNO Professor Emeritus of Chemistry, died July 8 at the age of 85.

Dr. Stocker was among the first faculty members at what was then called Louisiana State University in New Orleans when he was hired as associate professor of chemistry in September 1958. He was among the pioneering members of the chemistry faculty who were instrumental in established the university's research efforts and graduate education programs.

Dr. Stocker, was born on May 3, 1924, in Detroit, Michigan, had previously served on the faculty of what was then Mississippi Southern College, now the University of Southern Mississippi, in Hattiesburg. He earned a PhD from Tulane University in 1955 after working for a time in the chemical industry and continued his education with post-doctoral appointments at Tulane University and Heidelberg University. Dr. Stocker also had a master's degree from the University of Indiana and a bachelor's degree from Oliver College in Michigan.

Dr. Stocker specialized in organic chemistry and his publications involved organometallic chemistry, photochemistry and electrochemistry. Later in this career, he was active in the infrastructure of the chemical community and served various roles with the American Chemical Society, including chairman of the local section. He represented the local section in the organization's main governing body, a position he held for several years until this death.

Dr. Stocker's interests were wide-ranging. He served as the faculty sponsor of UNO's student science fiction-fantasy club, Survivors of the Big Bang, and was a founding member and longtime board member of the Friends of the UNO. Dr. Stocker was also active in the New Orleans Public Library and Jefferson Parish Library Friends organizations.

"His expertise in book dealing was a benefit to the Friends, and he always made sure the science fiction section of the Friend's semi-annual used book sale was well stocked," said Dana Criswell, past president of the Friends of the UNO Library. "Jack also participated in other projects with the Friends of the Library and was the impetus behind the successful 2005 library exhibit "Women in Chemistry."

His extensive personal library of recordings and books, especially science fiction, was lost in his Gentilly Woods home in the floods following Katrina. A chronicle of his life was published by Chemistry and Engineering News, the main new outlet of the American Chemical Society.

"Dr. Stocker took pleasure in speaking to a variety of interesting aspects of chemical literature," said his longtime friend and colleague Dr. Ray Sweany, UNO professor of

chemistry. “He also assembled a large repertoire of chemical trivia which he drew from in a talk titled ‘Chemage’.”

In 1998, Dr. Stocker published a book titled “Chemistry and Science Fiction.”

“He retired from teaching and UNO in 1990, but didn’t fully retire until his death.” Sweany said.

D. Stocker was preceded in death by his wife, Katie Wolters Stocker. Survivors include two sons, Daniel and wife Justine Stocker and Dave and wife Shelly Stocker, and one grandson, Asher Stocker.

When The Levee Broke - ACS Councilor Jack Stocker is uprooted after his New Orleans home is flooded

By Linda Raber

Jack H. Stocker went back to what is left of his New Orleans home on Nov. 11. He had been staying with various relatives since Aug. 31 when he left the ACS national meeting in Washington, D.C. His home was in the lower 9th ward, the last area in New Orleans to allow residents back in. "The house wasn't damaged much during the hurricane," he says, "but it was destroyed when the levee broke."

Stocker, emeritus professor of chemistry at the University of New Orleans, is a 62-year ACS member who has served on the ACS Council since 1972. If you don't know him by name, you might recognize him. He's the genial man from New Orleans who always wears a beret.

At the Washington meeting, Stocker had to tear himself away from the news of Hurricane Katrina and the levee failures to attend the council meeting. By the time the meeting was called to order at 8 AM, Wednesday, Aug. 31, he knew he wouldn't be going home that day. But he thought, at the most, it would be a week before he could get back. He had packed only a small bag with clothes for three or four days. These few items would turn out to be almost all the property he could retain.

ACS President William F. Carroll, who chaired the council meeting, talked to Stocker before council was called to order. "Jack was Jack," Carroll recalls, "only subdued. I asked him how he was doing, and I believe he said, 'Not well. My house was in the 9th ward, you see.' And I believe he said his house had about 8 feet of water. I asked him about insurance, and he just said, 'Sadly, no.'"

"A few minutes later, I gaveled the council meeting," Carroll says. "It occurred to me as I stood in front of the council, which has meetings that can sometimes be contentious, that this should be a morning relieved of trivia. That's when it occurred to me to remind us on this day of all days not to sweat the small stuff."

"Flint Lewis, ACS secretary, and I had worked on the resolution of support to hurricane victims, and as I read it, I thought about Jack, my wife Mary's family, and the two years I spent as a grad student in that city. I got through reading the resolution, but not by much," Carroll says.

While Stocker was with relatives, he received some photographs of his home. Some friends had gotten into Stocker's neighborhood and taken pictures of the home where he had lived for 40 years. So when he arrived in New Orleans this month, he knew he would

encounter devastation. Still, he was staggered. “It is a true catastrophe. I didn’t expect it to be nearly as bad,” he says.

“I had been through hurricanes in the past, and recall looking out in the street and seeing water up to 2 feet deep at the end of the block. Our kids went out with Ball jars and caught small fish in what was simply a lake from door to door as far as the eye could see.” He didn’t expect this event to be so devastatingly different.

Stocker made an audio recording of his impressions for this profile in C&EN. “I am now talking in front of the house on Nov. 11,” he says. “You look at it, and it’s only the remnants of a house. The front big window is gone, with markings below it indicating that they searched inside and didn’t find any bodies.

“You look inside the house, and you don’t know whether to laugh or cry. Something on the order of 20,000 books in my house are on the floor. All of them, of course, are ruined from the water. In some places, the rooms are at least 4 feet deep in books. And you can’t get through the house or even into the house to see anything else. I am trying to retrieve what I can from some of the few things that survived.

“Anything that could be tipped over was tipped over. A lot of it most capriciously. I had a heavy bookcase full of books that was tipped over on the floor. Right next to it was a bookcase with VHS tapes and DVDs all looking perfectly innocent, as if they hadn’t experienced anything.

“Even though I knew that there had been 5 to 7 feet of water in there, I didn’t realize that the actual thing that I was dealing with was not just all sorts of damaged paper that could be sifted through. This was basically layer by layer of debris, mostly paper that had gotten cemented together by the sediment in the mud.”

Later, he says, “I don’t mind the loss of the books so much as I mind loss of photograph albums and letters from our parents that simply are not replaceable at any price.

“What do you save, and what can you save?” he asks. “What do I do with a collection of 450 old-fashioned 78-rpm records? My wind-up Victrola to play them on has been underwater; it’s gone, and I don’t know if that kind of record can endure. Do I just leave 450 of them behind?

“Obviously, the piano, which was tipped over and broken down, can’t be saved, for instance. A lot of things that you, in your initial rush, want to save, you realize are not practical. Each one you decide to let go of, you have to say a personal good-bye to. These are things you’ve treasured all your life. It’s not easy, I can assure you,” he says.

“Speaking of records,” Stocker says, “my son just handed me one that he retrieved. ‘Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life.’ And all of us are having a well-needed sort of laugh about that. ‘Sweet mystery of life, at last I’ve found thee.’ ”

When asked how he's coping, he says: "I learned long ago that when you have a catastrophe, you just shut it down and let it seep out a little bit at a time. It works fairly well, and you don't go to pieces. I'm still working on that."

**Chemical & Engineering News – Meeting Weblog
ACS Fall National Meeting 2006 – September 10-14, 2006 – San Francisco**

Jack Stocker: Hurricane survivor and ACS celebrity

I had a delightful impromptu brunch with Jack Stocker yesterday. Stocker, 82, is retired from the University of New Orleans. He is an ACS Councilor and was one of the scientists featured in the Nov. 21, 2005, C&EN issue that dealt with the results of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Readers may recall that Jack was pictured on the cover standing resolute in front of what was left of his New Orleans home.

I was just finishing up a late breakfast at the Hilton in Atlanta when Jack walked into the restaurant. I asked him to join me, and the fun began. “Once a year, you should be able to enjoy something you like and have as much as you want of it,” Jack said. And this was to be the day. For Jack, the something is bacon. “You usually get a couple of strips, but you want more,” he said. At the buffet, he loaded his plate with bacon—and some corned beef hash and potatoes plus a good batch of fruit. We were there two hours as he happily worked his way through this decadent meal.

Jack has become a bit of a celebrity at the ACS meeting in Atlanta. While we were chatting, people kept coming up to the table to say hello and ask him how he is. He says he finds the attention kind of puzzling, but certainly doesn’t mind. He loves talking to people about most anything.

How is he doing? He is living in the French Quarter in New Orleans in the same building where one of his sons lives. He says his place is “an upper graduate-level apartment,” and he loves it. His son and friends furnished it for him so that he could move into a “ready-made nest.” For this, he says he is eternally grateful.

He is also in his element. The street in front of the apartment building is the staging area for many of the parades that pass through New Orleans. Of the tall, narrow old house across the street, complete with a balcony, he says: “All you have to do is look at it and you can hear Stanley Kowalski shouting ‘Stella!’ I knew I was home.”

While happily ensconced in his new apartment, Jack hasn’t had the best luck when it comes to his old home. Readers of the “Faces of the Storm” issue of C&EN know that Jack lost everything when the levees broke following Hurricane Katrina. This included a collection of more than 20,000 science fiction books that he treasured.

He wanted to salvage as much as possible, so he signed an agreement with a nonprofit group to move some sofas and other large objects that had been blocking the doorways but nothing else. He insisted, and they agreed, that he would be present when the removals were taking place. He had to wait until January.

Jack thinks it’s kind of spooky that his son’s girlfriend was having nightmares about the house in mid-January and insisted that she be driven over to see it. She found it gutted to

the studs. Absolutely everything was gone and hauled away. Jack was devastated again. But he's coping.

When the going gets rough, Jack says he likes to play Pollyanna's glad game. He explains that in the story by Eleanor H. Porter, Pollyanna, whose father is a missionary, is sent a barrel with some crutches in it at Christmas instead of the doll she wanted. Pollyanna, relentlessly optimistic, finds something to be happy about and is joyful because she doesn't need the crutches. Jack has coped by trying to find Pollyanna's spirit.

He tells me that the good things that have happened as a result of the hurricane are that he has an apartment in the French Quarter—a lifelong aspiration—and that Katrina blew all the mosquitoes away, so there isn't as much West Nile virus. He has also been in touch with many friends and colleagues who contacted him as a result of the C&EN article.

After about an hour, our conversation drifted to science fiction and never really came back to Earth. I am a fan of this underappreciated genre, and Jack is the man to talk to. He offered recommendations for my reading pleasure and even suggested that scientists could use science fiction as a way to bring people into the sciences. "You don't go to annual reports for your sense of wonder," he says.—Linda Raber, filed at 8:28 AM