



## John Bruce Hays

June 21, 1937 - January 3, 2014

John Bruce Hays of Corvallis died Jan. 3, 2014, of lung cancer. He was a lifelong nonsmoker.

John was born June 21, 1937, in Springfield, Ill., to Loren Eastman Hays and Mary Russell Hays. He later moved to California and graduated from Monrovia High School in 1954.

He turned down a Naval ROTC scholarship to Stanford University in order to attend Deep Springs College, a small liberal arts institution located on a cattle ranch near Bishop, Calif. During the two-year course of study, he received an excellent liberal arts education, learned to ride a horse, round up cattle, milk cows and participate in student government.

John subsequently attended the University of New Mexico on an ROTC scholarship. He majored in chemistry, math and social life, and met Judith Gumm. The couple married in 1961, while John was honoring his obligation to the U.S. Navy. He served three years on a minesweeper.

Science called to John, so he resigned his commission and enrolled in the physical chemistry graduate program at the University of California, San Diego. During the first years of graduate school, he continued in the Naval Reserve as an officer on a World War II-era destroyer.

He earned a doctorate in physical chemistry in 1967 and did postdoctoral research at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. He joined the faculty at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, earning the position of full professor. However, he always yearned to return to the West, and in 1987 became chairman of the Agricultural Chemistry Department at Oregon State University. He later resigned as chairman to pursue his research full time.

John was internationally recognized as an expert in mammalian and plant DNA repair. He continued his research part time after retiring from OSU in 2010.

John loved classical music and could identify almost any piece after hearing only a part of it. A sports enthusiast, he was particularly fond of pick-up basketball, where he made many good friends. After his knees objected, he took up bicycling and could ride up to the top of Vineyard Mountain with only a few intermittent accidents.

He was active in the Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan, where he pursued his interest in social justice. John enjoyed fine wine, Camp Sherman and the Metolius River. A family man, he was happy spending time with his cousins and grandchildren.

He is survived by his wife, Judith; daughter Elinor Roderick and son-in-law, Wyatt Roderick, of Charleston, W.Va.; Stephen Hays and his partner, Cyndie Podrybau, of Portland; daughter Laura Hays of Eugene; daughter-in-law Kelly Ambrose Hays of Portland; five grandchildren, Sebastian Roderick, Victoria Roderick, Hannah Roderick, John "Jack" Hays and Rory Hays; brother Andrew Hays of Coburg; two nieces; and 16 beloved cousins.

A funeral service will take place at 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 18, at the Episcopal

Church of the Good Samaritan, 333 N.W. 35th St., Corvallis. A reception will follow the service.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that remembrances in John Hays' name be made to support lung cancer research and treatment at the Oregon Health & Science University Knight Cancer Institute. Please make your checks payable to the OHSU Foundation and send them to Mail Stop 45, P.O. Box 4000, Portland, OR 97208-9852. Alternatively, donations can be made to the Church of the Good Samaritan.

# Tribute Wall

“ To the Children and Grandchildren of John Hays,  
Gosh, how I will miss your dad or granddad! To me, he was a great big, warm hearted guy with an unquenchable passion for science. Your Dad, your Mom and I connected while your Dad was in graduate school at UCSD. He was a physical biochemist working in Bruno Zimm’s lab and was studying the stiffness of double stranded DNA. I was very impressed with your Dad and his science, because it was so rigorous and quantitative and because physical biochemists were sort of the “top dogs” in the field of life sciences. Anyway we struck up a friendship and that’s when your Dad suggested a backpacking trip across the Sierras with our spouses. My wife thought your Dad was nuts, but ultimately relented to go. This was a 10-day east-to-west trip across the Sierras to the car parked by another party who were doing a trip in the opposite direction. After sweltering heat and elevation nausea the first day, the prospects did not seem great. But then as we really got into the mountains, things looked up because your Dad would go out fishing in the morning and cook us trout for breakfast. I won’t bore you with the other details of the trip, such as climbing over the dreaded Black Rock Pass, but I have to tell you that when we reached the other side, we decided to celebrate by going to a Denny’s to have a restaurant-cooked meal. We hadn’t had a chance to clean up and while savoring the meal, we noticed that the poor people sitting in the booth next to us asked to be moved. We probably smelled like a hog confinement facility. But anyway, it was an adventure that my wife, Liz, and I will never forget.

It wasn’t til some 35 years that your Dad and I connected again. I invited your Dad to join the scientific advisory board of a small biotech company back at our old haunt in San Diego. We met on a quarterly basis, so I got to work closely with your Dad every few months. I can’t tell you what a pleasure it was to work with him. He had great ideas, lots of enthusiasm and a good sense of humor. We reminisced a bit, but spent most of time in earnest trying to help this company succeed. We both believed in what they doing and your Dad stayed on task with the company right to the end.

He must have been a wonderful Dad and GrandDad. I send you my

*sympathies, but hope that you can celebrate the life of this outstanding guy.*

*Steve Howell*

*Ames, Iowa*

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**Stephen Howell** - January 17, 2014 at 02:17 PM

JC

“ *Judy & Family*

*Pat & I have very fond memories of John and the parties you gave for us at your house. He always made us made us feel right at home. His knowledge of the world and (wine too) we will never forget. Please remember Judy you will always be our friend and if ever you just need someone to talk to we are here for you.*

*Our blessings and prayers go out to you and the family  
Pat & June Curran*

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**June Curran** - January 17, 2014 at 11:15 AM

LG

“ *Conversations with John were always fruitful and deep, and he so often spoke about music, the outdoors or the intersection between science and religion. I so appreciated his willingness to offer his opinions, his scientific explanation and also his willingness to listen. Judy, I think of you both every day and send my warmest regards along with prayers and deep sadness. He is missed. We wish you all the peace your heart can hold.*

*Linda and Keith Gelbrich*

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**Linda Gelbrich** - January 17, 2014 at 03:33 AM

JJ

“ *Sincere sympathy in your loss, Judith.*

*You may not remember us, but you very kindly invited us to share your Labor day party quite some years ago. You also introduced my brother and sister in law from Australia to an American Labor day gathering then, including the game of horseshoes. We really appreciated this generous hospitality.*

*Just before Christmas my husband and I were on our way to OHSU for my husband to have a pre op. appointment and when we stopped at a rest area I spotted you and John and I realized then how frail he was.*

*This must have been a very difficult time for you and the family and I hold you in my thoughts and prayers.*

*Janet and Denis Jarvis.*

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**Janet E. Jarvis** - January 16, 2014 at 12:58 PM

 Tania  
Porter

“ *Judith and family, I am one of the many people who can honestly say that knowing John changed the course of my life. The two years I spent as John's manuscript editor were the most stressful and rewarding of my early career. I loved that man and his encouragement led to my return to school and to a world I never imagined open to me. I now live in London with my partner and will soon complete my second masters degree. When I left the EMT department John gave me a card (which I still have) that said this: as we get farther apart, you will appear smaller. Do not be alarmed. Is a science thing. This is how I have always pictured John... Far away, but always filling the same large space in my heart. The world is a sadder place without him in it.*

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**Tania Porter** - January 14, 2014 at 12:13 PM

JL

“ *What a dear man. One memory I have is all of ua waiting for him to show up at his own birthday party only to find out he'd crashed his bike. Also of him riding that bike all the time up vineyard mt. God bless you John this family will miss you.*

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**Jackie luttrell** - January 06, 2014 at 09:13 PM