
**Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison
On the Death of Professor Emeritus Robert Herbert March**

Robert Herbert (Bob) March, emeritus professor of physics, died at age 81 on August 4, 2015 in Fitchburg, Wisconsin. Bob was born in Chicago, Illinois, on February 28, 1934, the son of Herbert and Jane (Grbac) March. He received his undergraduate and graduate education at the University of Chicago, finishing a PhD in physics in 1960. His thesis was an experimental study in elementary particle physics. March remained active in elementary particle physics and high energy astrophysics throughout his career.

He joined the faculty of the University of Wisconsin as an instructor in 1961, and moved up through the ranks to become full professor of physics in 1971. In 1981 Bob acquired a joint appointment with Integrated Liberal Studies, and served as chair of ILS from 1987-1990, and again from 1996 until his retirement and award of emeritus status in 1999.

Bob had many talents. He was a competent banjo player and folk singer, and co-authored the popular song “The Ballad of Sigmund Freud”. He was a skilled writer, and spokesperson for science. He reviewed many popular and technical science books for *Physics Today* and other journal publications. He wrote several entries on physics for the *World Book* and *Macmillan* encyclopedias. He appeared frequently on Wisconsin Public Radio talk shows.

His outstanding contribution to science education for non-scientists was his creation of a new course, Physics 107, called ‘Physics for Poets’, and the accompanying text book of the same name, published by McGraw-Hill in 1970. Physics 107 was one of the first courses for non-science majors, an idea subsequently adopted by many science departments. The text has been through four editions, and has been translated into six foreign languages. *Physics for Poets* attracted about 400 UW students at its maximum popularity. His skill at training undergraduates in the Arts attracted campus wide attention, and led to his joint appointment with ILS. He created or helped to create three new courses in ILS, and for three years prior to his retirement he was a Faculty Fellow with the Bradley Learning Community, helping first-year students find their way into the intellectual life of the University.

March remained active in physics research throughout his career. Soon after joining the UW faculty, he co-authored a paper announcing the discovery of a new elementary particle, called the rho meson. He was especially skilled both at computer programming for data analysis, and design of experimental hardware. As a young assistant professor he worked on the construction of a 30” hydrogen bubble chamber for Argonne National Laboratory. He then became interested in studying symmetry breaking in the decay of newly discovered ‘strange’ mesons and hyperons. When the new National Accelerator Laboratory began operation in Batavia, Illinois, in the early 1970’s, March worked on a very fruitful experimental program to measure baryon magnetic moments. March worked in parallel on a proton decay experiment in a mine in Utah, and developed an interest in astrophysics, which he pursued through various ground based experiments to study cosmic radiation.

Robert March received the US Steel Science Writing Award of the American Institute of Physics twice, in 1971, and again in 1975. The University of Wisconsin gave him the Amoco Distinguished Teaching Award in 1992.

Robert March was preceded in death by his parents, and is survived by two brothers, William and Richard March, by his son Thomas, and a grandson Andrew.

He was an engaging personality, and will be remembered by all of those who were fortunate enough to know him.

The Memorial Resolution Committee

Robert Joynt, Professor of Physics

Don D. Reeder Emeritus Professor of Physics

Lee Pondrom Emeritus Professor of Physics (chair)