

## Remembering Professor Mike Murtaugh

Cheryl Dvorak

Professor Michael Murtaugh, PhD, passed away Tuesday September 18 from complications of pancreatic cancer. He was 67.

Mike joined the college in 1985 and spent the entirety of his University of Minnesota career in the Department of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences. He was a consummate faculty member, excelling in teaching graduate courses and conducting research and outreach. Mike authored more than 225 peer-reviewed journal articles, was the primary advisor for 30 Master's and PhD students, and held three U.S. patents. His influence extended throughout the Academic Health Center at the University and throughout the world. At the time of his death, Mike was serving on the editorial boards of more than a dozen academic journals, and had successfully completed nearly 160 sponsored projects as Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator.

Mike was a respected and highly sought after mentor. He always had people coming and going from his office asking for scientific, career, and personal advice. His door was always open and he always stopped what he was doing to help others. He touched many lives during his career. Besides his numerous graduate student advisees, he also mentored over fifteen veterinary students, thirty-six undergraduate and high school students, twelve post-doctoral researchers, twenty visiting scientists, and numerous others who came to him for advice and support. He cared about everyone not only scientifically, but also personally. He always wanted to do what was in a student's best interests, even though it may not have been what was in his best interest. His lasting legacy is in the scientific training and education of a generation of swine health specialists and researchers.

Prof. Murtaugh was an international leader in swine immunology, and devoted considerable effort over the past 25 years in battling the Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome virus (PRRSv), a disease that costs U.S. swine producers alone some \$500 million annually. Mike used molecular biological approaches to first understand the nature of PRRSv and investigated in detail the immunological response of pigs to this pathogen.

Mike earned the B.S. degree in biology at the University of Notre Dame and then served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Venezuela. He earned a Ph.D. in entomology at the Ohio State University. The University of Texas Medical School in Houston was his next stop— he spent four years in a post-doctoral position in the Departments of internal Medicine and Pharmacology— before assuming a faculty position in St. Paul.



He will be remembered for his dry sense of humor and positive outlook on life, character traits that he maintained even as his battle with cancer raged. Mike cared passionately about science and derived some of his greatest personal satisfaction working on the college's Strategic Plan and the International Conference on One Medicine and One Science (iCOMOS). Mike cared deeply about science informing policy and saw the need for scientists to be more actively involved in communicating about their research. I am grateful to have known him, and stand in awe of the many contributions he made to our college.

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