

From: Robert S Sheridan <rss@unr.edu>
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To: Robert S Sheridan <rss@unr.edu>
Subject: FW: Sad news -

Dear Friends of the Reaction Mechanisms Conferences:

William von Eggers Doering passed away on January 3 at the age of 93. Bill was a truly towering figure in physical organic chemistry and was the life blood of the Reaction Mechanisms Conference from its inception in 1946. I believe he had been at every meeting of the RMC until the last two when his health prevented his attendance. The Conference honored Bill at its 2004 meeting at Northwestern as a "giant" in the field of mechanistic chemistry. There was a tribute session as part of that meeting put together by his former students.

Doering's major interests were in organic structures and reaction mechanisms. Just a few of his accomplishments include his studies on thermal rearrangements which showed that a chair-like transition state is preferred for the Cope rearrangement, and that degenerate Cope rearrangements in bi- and tricyclic systems lead to molecules with "fluxional" structures (i.e. bullvalene). Doering brought carbene chemistry to the attention of organic chemists; he studied carbene insertions, additions to multiple bonds, and intramolecular rearrangements. His interests were very wide-ranging, and he made contributions to the mechanism of solvolysis of tertiary systems, the Diels-Alder reaction, the Baeyer-Villiger rearrangement, the stereochemistry and internal rotations in non-concerted diradical processes, and cis-trans isomerism in higher polyenes. For a nice tribute in Accounts of Chemical Research to Doering's numerous contributions to physical organic chemistry, please see: <http://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/ar800100h>

Bill Doering was born in Fort Worth, Texas. He was educated at Harvard (B.S. 1938, Ph.D. 1943) and served on the faculties of Columbia (1943-52), Yale (1952-68) and Harvard. Among his many honors were the ACS awards in Pure Chemistry (1953) and for Creative Work in Synthetic Organic Chemistry (1966), and the James Flack Norris Award for Physical Organic Chemistry (1989).

He will be greatly missed, but we are proud to carry on the tradition of the Reaction Mechanisms Conferences in his memory.

Bob Sheridan
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