

Charlie Wu

I met Charlie in 2004 when I attended the Influence Coefficient Workshop at University of Western Ontario in Canada, and quickly realised his stature belied the enormous heart and incredible passion this man carried.

The following year I was invited together with Mike Hinds and Alexander Seyfarth to come and teach at the annual XRF Short course, organised by Charlie and originally taught by James Willis and Andy Duncan. And so, a great friendship spanning many years was born. James and Andy retired and Mike, Alexander and I joined Charlie's faculty for the annual short course in Modern X-ray Spectrometry. This course was already a North-American institution when we joined, and as a team the four of us adapted and changed and moulded it into a resource that educated hundreds of spectroscopists over the years. Bruno Vrebos from Panalytical also became a regular lecturer presenting the Fundamental Parameter workshop in the advanced week.



Andy Duncan, Charlie Wu and James Willis, Niagara falls 2005.

Charlie was the face of the UWO XRF Course – the first contact students had and the person who kept contact, sorted their problems and gave the solid logistical background to our teaching. The Annual XRF course was his passion and a year's course was barely over before he was at Denver X-ray Conference canvassing suppliers for sponsorship for the next year. He was truly the heart and soul of the course and forged friendships that extended far beyond the course.



James and Charlie 2005



2006 with Ferdinand Claisse

One of the highlights of the course for him was always the weekend excursion to Niagara, and he NEVER got tired of Maid of the mist. Every year he showed the sights to the class as if he was visiting them for the first time. It was also time for his annual glass of wine at Joseph's winery.



Charlie REALLY never got tired of Maid of the Mist 2013

In the class he was full of fun, and even managed to win the Jerk of the Year award for nodding off during the late-afternoon suppliers' presentations. It was the final year that we taught with James and Andy and James was trying to announce the award with tears of laughter rolling down his face, the whole class in stitches and Charlie still oblivious of the fact that we awarded him the most prestigious course award!

He was also the person who with infinite patience could take a student through a troublesome practical exercise repeatedly until they understood. His caring extended to us as faculty, and on many an occasion a sinusitis sneeze was all it took for him to call his Chinese Medical Practitioner wife Ellen, and next thing she was there with her box of needles and ointments to nurse you back to health.

His family was his pride and joy – we were regularly regaled with the latest news of Frederick and Margaret and he was immensely proud of Ellen’s achievements and supportive of her studying and later practise. As Ellen progressed in her trained, he increasingly converted us all to Chinese medicine!

After his retirement the XRF course moved to Hamilton College in the USA and there Charlie continued to charm the students and staff alike. He also took up cycling and we were all in awe of his adventures.



Best of Class 2006 Lindsay McHenry



Proudly demonstrating sample preparation 2013

I am writing on behalf of Mike and Alexander too when I say that Charlie gave us an opportunity that had an enormous impact on our careers, and an opportunity for growth in our own knowledge and experience as only teaching a subject can provide. His commitment and passion helped to grow this course to the international gold standard in XRF training, as our students from every continent except Antarctica demonstrates.

He leaves an enormous gap in the hearts of all who knew him, and in the XRF community he will never be forgotten. As Bruno Vrebos always said – go well General!

Maggi Loubser, Mike Hinds and Alexander Seyfarth





Charlie and Ellen at Niagara Falls 2015



Class of 2019 - BASIC SHORT COURSE IN MODERN X-RAY SPECTROMETRY THEORY