



Dennis C. Prieve

September 1, 1947 - May 11, 2023

Dennis C. Prieve (1947 - 2023)

After an extended illness, Dennis C. Prieve passed away on Thursday May 11, 2023 in his home surrounded by his wife and his beloved cats Zia and Yuri. He is survived by his wife Susan Burkett, his two children Kristin Dunkle (Marna Dunkle-Kock), Jennifer Parrack (E. Taylor Parrack III), and his three grandchildren Aileene, Rin and Ty Parrack.

Dennis was born September 1, 1947 in Portage, WI to Eleanor Stubbe and Karl Prieve. His formative years were spent in Florida with his mother and stepfather, Art Anslem.

Dennis chose to study chemical engineering, after discovering that his original choice of accounting was not as mathematically challenging as he wanted. He earned a B.S. (1970) from the University of Florida, an M.S (1972) and a PhD (1975) from the University of Delaware. He joined the faculty of Carnegie Mellon in 1975 where he worked for the rest of his professional career, holding the Gulf Chair for two decades. He remained a Professor Emeritus after his retirement in 2017. Dennis held visiting professorships at Princeton and the University of Melbourne.

Dennis loved research and he became interested in solving problems in the physical chemistry of colloidal materials as a graduate student. Dennis went on to perform foundational and ground-breaking work in colloidal stability, electrokinetics, phoretic transport, and interparticle forces; tackling both experimental and theoretical aspects with rigor and detail. Dennis was a

leader in the colloidal and fluid mechanics communities with a history of outstanding scientific achievements. Dennis was generous in sharing his ideas and time with this community, which made everyone in his field better scientists and engineers. Dennis contributed to Carnegie Mellon being a place with an international reputation for excellence in colloids and soft matter research. As a member of the Chemical Engineering faculty, Dennis elevated both the intellectual curiosity and collegiality of the department making it a most interesting and fun place to work.

Dennis won many prestigious awards for his work, but he considered his greatest achievement to be the success of his students and collaborators. He often commented that the most important product of his research career was the students he mentored and their careers, including CEOs, University Presidents, and eminent faculty.

When not teaching or researching Dennis enjoyed long walks no matter the weather, solving sudoku and working crossword puzzles with his wife Susan. Dennis was a loving husband and a doting grandfather. He even proudly gifted his prized graduate school mathematics textbook to his eldest grandchild at her high school graduation.

Dennis believed everyone deserved food security and supported several local food banks. He loved eating out at various restaurants whether in Pittsburgh or while traveling; please celebrate Dennis's life by taking a friend or loved one out for a meal and share a memory of Dennis or make a donation to your local food bank.

Tribute Wall

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“ I thought a lot before writing this memory. I'm from Azerbaijan and first got to know Dr. Prieve while I was still living there—around ten years ago. He was one of the few people who touched my academic life and helped me climb the career ladder. I used to send him my questions from Azerbaijan, and he always replied to my emails very quickly. Once, I even asked for his notes, not really expecting a response—but to my surprise, he sent them within a day. I was deeply moved by his caring and supportive nature, even from 7,000 miles away. My heartfelt condolences to his family. I wish I had had the chance to meet him in person.

Orkhan H - May 20, 2025 at 05:57 PM

JW

“ Rest in glory Professor Prieve. Your graduate course in Colloids, Polymers, and Surfaces was the finest and most daunting course that I took as an undergraduate senior. Thank you for your peerless contributions to chemical engineering. You were a grace to your students.

Joseph Witkowski - May 24, 2023 at 10:16 PM

BM

“ *Dennis loved cooking, especially for his friends. He loved to make beef bourgiugnon, chicken Marsala, chicken piccata and quiche Lorraine. Times with friends(the Zeroes) during Thanksgivings led to many late nights of laughter and conviviality.*

Most of all, he had a great capacity to help others. In fact, he helped my daughter with decisions such as what field would be good for her. She often mentions how much Dennis meant to her.

Heartfelt condolences to the family. He will be missed by many.

Barbara McGurren - May 22, 2023 at 05:52 PM