

# Remembering Robert L. Lichter

October 26, 1941 to March 31, 2018

Compiled and edited by Michael P. Filosa

We were fortunate to have Bob Lichter in our section for the last ten or so years after he retired to Alford, MA in 2002 with his wife Diane Scott-Lichter. Bob has been very influential in both local and national ACS since early in his career and he fully engaged with NESACS once he moved back to Massachusetts. Bob was committed to NESACS and was willing to run as Trustee in the upcoming election despite his recent battle with prostate cancer. However, I am sad to report that Bob passed away at Dana- Farber Cancer Institute on March 31 at the age of 76.

Bob was born in Newton, MA to Morris and Ada Lichter. Bob graduated Boston Latin School at 16. He received his A.B. cum laude from Harvard College in 1962 and his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1967, both in chemistry. He was a NIH postdoctoral fellow at the Technische Universität Braunschweig, Germany, from 1967 to 1968, and a research fellow at the California Institute of Technology from 1968 to 1970.

After 13 years in the chemistry department at Hunter College of the City University of New York, including four years as department chair, he became regional director of grants at Research Corporation from 1983 to 1986. From 1986 to 1989 he served as vice provost for research and graduate studies at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Before embarking on his current position in 2002, he was executive director of the New York City-based Camille and Henry Dreyfus Foundation from 1989, where he directed the strategies and administration of ten programs and related activities that yielded about \$6 million in grants and awards in the chemical and closely related sciences for research, education, science communication, and human resource development.

Among his professional activities, Lichter was Chair of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's (AAAS) Section on Chemistry for 2001-2002, and was Secretary of the Section for 2004-2009.

Lichter has also been a councilor of the Council on Undergraduate Research, has participated in the science education reform effort Project Kaleidoscope, has chaired the Section on Chemical Sciences and the Committee on Science Education of the New York Academy of Sciences, and was a member of the Trustees' Advisory Council of the New York Hall of Science. A member of the Board of Governors of the National Conferences on Undergraduate Research from 1992 to 1998, he was chair of the board from 1994 to

1996, and chair of the 2001 Gordon Research Conference on Innovations in College Chemistry Teaching.

At the American Chemical Society (ACS), Lichter has been a member of the ACS Committee on Science and its Committee on Minority Affairs, and the latter's subcommittee on the ACS Scholars Program. He has served on the Advisory Board to the then-Office of Communications, and on the Graduate Education Advisory Board.

He has been Chair of the Georgia Section of ACS, and was Chair of the ACS Implementation Team on Minorities in Academia, which was created by the ACS Board of Directors to increase the numbers of underrepresented minority chemical scientists on the faculties of doctoral institutions.

Lichter was recently a member of the ACS Committee on Budget and Finance (B&F), in which he has served as vice chair, chaired the B&F subcommittee on Program Funding Requests, and was a member of the B&F Committee's Program Review Advisory Group, which reviews all ACS programs. He was also a member of the Advisory Board to the ACS Development Office. He has been a Councilor and Alternate Councilor for NESACS from 2008-2018.

Lichter has served on and has chaired numerous national panels and advisory boards dealing with broad educational and scientific issues, including many for ACS, the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the National Research Council (NRC). He was a founding member of the NRC's Chemical Sciences Roundtable and served on its steering committee. From 2002 to 2008, Lichter was a member of the NSF Committee on Equal Opportunities in Science and Engineering (CEOSE), which he chaired in 2005. A Congressionally mandated committee that reports directly to Congress, CEOSE advises NSF on policies and programs directed to broadening participation of women, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Lichter has also served on the NSF Advisory Committee on the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Performance Assessment, and on the NSF Advisory Committee on Environmental Research and Education.

Lichter was a member of Sigma Xi's Committee on Public Understanding of Science, and an advisor to the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate, a program of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching that has explored ways to enhance the quality of doctoral education.

He served as Chair of the Board of Governors of the Massachusetts Academy of Sciences. He participated in a NSF-funded project exploring the status of women in chemistry, computer science, and mathematics and statistics internationally.

Lichter was a Fellow of the Association for Women in Science, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the American Chemical Society. For his efforts in promoting diversity and inclusiveness in science, he was the 2010 recipient of the ACS Award for Encouraging Disadvantaged Students into Careers in the Chemical Sciences.

Lichter's research area was in carbon-13 and nitrogen-15 nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, in which he published more than three dozen papers and co-authored three books. In his current position, he develops and manages strategies for providing advising and consulting services to educational, philanthropic and non-profit organizations.

Among other accomplishments in that role, he has organized two workshops on the postdoctorate for NSF that yielded new programs and policies, and has carried out an examination of ACS's education activities. In 2009, he served an extended appointment as a senior consultant to NSF's Division of Human Resource Development, leading a major component of the examination of NSF's Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate.

He met the love of his life, Diane Scott, in 1988. In 27 years of marriage, they lived in Brooklyn, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Boston, and the Berkshires, and traveled around the world. In addition to his wife, he is survived by his sister Nancy Seebert and her husband Bill, of Gresham, Oregon; his son Derek and daughter-in-law Jude Shabry, of Cambridge, Mass.; his daughter Allison and son-in-law Greg Joseph, of Brooklyn, N.Y.; and his three remarkable grandchildren Julian, Liliana, and Nina Lee.

He was an avid hiker, climbing mountains across the U.S. and Europe, as well as in Peru, Japan, New Zealand, and on Cape Verde. He enjoyed active hikes closer to home with the Berkshire Silver Scramblers.

He was passionate about choral music, and sang with groups including the Harvard Glee Club, Collegiate Chorale, New York Choral Society, Berkshire Bach Society, and Berkshire Lyric.

In addition, Bob was an active community volunteer. One of his joys later in life was working with the collaborative and experienced team that is implementing the Alford Broadband Initiative to bring high-speed Internet to the town

Donations in Bob's name may be directed to Berkshire Lyric or the American Chemical Society Scholars Program C/O FINNERTY & STEVENS FUNERAL HOME, 426 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230. To send remembrances to his family please visit <http://www.finnertyandstevens.com>

**Sources:** *Bob's official ACS bio and his obituary at Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home, Great Barrington, MA.*



*Members of the Subsection Task Force: (l-r) Jerry Jasinski (Keene State College), Ruth Tanner (University of Massachusetts Lowell), Morton Hoffman (Boston University), Bob Lichter (Merrimack Consultants).*



*Pictured is the NESACS contingent who attended the Summerthing event at Tanglewood on August 2, 2009 hosted by Bob Lichter and Diane Scott-Lichter. Left-to-right on the Tanglewood lawn: Amie Shaw, Judy Wright, Tony Wright, Bob Lichter, Diane Scott-Lichter, James Phillips, Dorothy Phillips. Foreground, Ethan and Owen Shaw. Photo by Mike Shaw*