

Eulogy of the late Roy H. Bible

My dear AMMRL colleagues:

I was shocked to discover that one of the grandest American names in NMR history had passed from this Earth without my knowing about it. It was always a privilege to call Dr. Roy Bible my friend. I enjoyed every moment I spent with him.

Roy wrote *Interpretation of NMR Spectra: An Empirical Approach* which was published in 1965 and was undoubtedly the first book that anyone could lean on to take advantage of this new commercially available instrumental technique. Other early books by notables such as Tom Farrar and Ted Becker would follow, but Roy's book was all that anyone with a Varian A60A could lean on and become the department expert for quite a long time.

Roy died on April 19 at age 83, but I knew him well enough to know that he was perpetually young. His enthusiasm and resonance with his colleagues, young and old, would never decay. He was always so magnificently interested in all aspects of the NMR profession.

Roy and SIU professor Cal Meyers were at University of Illinois at the same time and finished their doctorates at about the same time. You can look up obit details in the May 10 issue of C&EN. The Bible-Meyers relationship brought Roy to Carbondale two or three times since I arrived here in 1989, always to give a seminar and visit faculty, many of whom I think were too young to understand the profound impact Roy made on our field.

I was always included in the schedule of people Roy would be visiting, We found that 30 minutes wasn't enough, so next time 60 minutes was budgeted, but *that* wasn't enough either and it was decided that the next time it would have to be 90 minutes. After a day of faculty and student visits, followed by a seminar late on a Friday afternoon, a group of us would go to Giant City Lodge (Giant City park being named for the magnificent sandstone formations made by the last glacier that left behind the appearance of city alleys, etc.). Those who know this area usually pass by the prime rib and other temptations in favor of the fried chicken dinner served family-style and that is what we always did.

Roy was great to be with. As Rich Shoemaker of the Steering Committee remarked, "he was just a joy to be around." When he was escorted to my lab and office for my visit with him, I never wanted to sit him down in my office.

Roy liked being with a spectrometer, so I would arrange to be working on lineshape spec or something when he arrived and I would ask, "Do you mind if we talk and shim at the same time?" and, of course, he liked that much more than sitting in an office.

When I would talk about hardware modifications I had made to our old VXR-500, he would want to follow me through all the coax to understand how and why I had

detached the 3rd RF bay from the console and slid it in behind to get the heavy ENI amplifiers away from the magnet to improve homogeneity. He delighted in that stuff.

During one of our last visits, he sat with me while I was shimming and I pointed to a stack of unix system administration manuals next to me. I told him that I had decided it was necessary for me to become expert, so I was working hard at it and sort of enjoying it.

His face brightened with a large smile and he said, “Really?? Me, too!!!” and he pointed to my stack of books and said, “I have that one, and that one, and that one, etc.” In his mid -70’s, Roy was still branching out into new competencies and it was impossible to miss his excitement about all of it.

However, where I saw Roy really having the most fun was at ENC where he seemed always to give a poster. I think he enjoyed explaining his posters more than almost anything else. I would make sure to mark his day and location as soon as I got my ENC notebook and he would be having a great time explaining some unexpected result. Roy was never a chest-thumper and his motive was never to impress us with how smart he was, how big his [pulse sequence] was, etc. He had simply found something interesting in his work during the previous year and he wanted to tell you about it – and he wanted to do it in a way that his visitors would understand.

Whenever I made up my “must see” list of posters, Roy’s was always the most important to me because I knew that I would walk away with a complete understanding of whatever he was presenting and that I would experience all of Roy’s joy and enthusiasm while he was trying to explain his discovery to me.

Gosh, I wish I were a lot more like Dr. Roy Bible.

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Editorial note:

This eulogy was e-mailed on 24 May 2010 to the AMMRL ([Association of Managers of Magnetic Resonance Laboratories](#)) and distributed by e-mail to the AMMRL mailing list. Convinced that it merited a more permanent record, I sought and obtained Bill Stevens' permission to publish it. It is now part of the open access *Stan's Library* (<http://www.ebyte.it/library/Library.html>), accessible also through its DOI number ([10.3247/sl3nmr10.003](https://doi.org/10.3247/sl3nmr10.003)).