



The Magazine of the Society of Physics Students

SPS HISTORIAN, PEGGY DIXON REMEMBERED



Dr. Peggy Dixon with long-time colleagues and friends. In photo above she is standing with (l to r): Drs. Rexford Adelberger (JURP Editor); Ray Askew (former SPS President); and George Miner (former SPS At-Large Executive Committee Member).

Peggy A. Dixon, Physicist

— by *Stephanie Campbell*

Peggy A. Dixon, 75, SPS Historian and physics professor at Montgomery College in Takoma Park, MD, from 1962 until retiring in 1988, died July 20, 2003, at a hospice in Tucson, AZ, after a stroke. She lived in Tucson.

Over the years, Dr. Dixon had served on national committees of Sigma Pi Sigma, the Physics Honor Society; and the Society of

Physics Students, the professional society open to physics students and their mentors (Sigma Pi Sigma and the Society of Physics Students are organizations of the American Institute of Physics). She also served on committees of the American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT).

In 1953, as a student at the University of Maryland-College Park, Peggy was inducted into Sigma Pi Sigma. Later as a physics professor at Montgomery College, she served, on the local level, as the SPS Advisor. Then, beginning in 1975, she served for a number of years at the national level as SPS Zone 4 Councilor. From 1984-87,

Peggy served as the American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT) Chesapeake Section Representative. After her retirement from Montgomery College in 1988, she served as a consultant for Sigma Pi Sigma and SPS in the American Institute of Physics Education Division. Then from 1992 until her death earlier this year, she was the Historian for SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma.

Dr. Peggy Dixon helped create and contributed ideas to use on PBS's "Wee Wonders" science program for children.

For the past decade, she traveled between her home in Tucson, AZ, and the American Institute of Physics in College Park, MD, to serve as Historian for Sigma Pi Sigma, the Physics Honor Society.

As she was a tireless advocate for the two-year college student, the SPS Council established the SPS-Two Year College Leadership Scholarship in her memory in late September 2003.

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In the photo above, Peggy receives a hug from her friend Dr. Stanley Shepherd, former SPS Council member.

PEGGY DIXON REMEMBERED *(continued from page 1)*

Remembrance by Former SPS President, Thomas Olsen, Lewis & Clark College

Peggy Dixon remembered. Peggy Dixon remembered the important things. She remembered to have a smile for each person that she met. She remembered to have a perpetual twinkle in her eye. She remembered to have an encouraging word for each person experiencing a moment of self-doubt.

Peggy Dixon remembered how to live with gusto. She remembered where the best shellfish was to be found in Montgomery County. She remembered the Sound of Music, and she played her recorder with the Trapp Family Singers each summer. She remembered to sew a quilt for the sanctuary of her church. She remembered to cheer the Diamondbacks all the way to a World Series championship. She remembered to make friends with colleagues from all backgrounds, even when that was not the way to advance in the profession.

Peggy Dixon remembered how special Two Year College students are. She remembered to teach them and inspire them. She remembered to engage them in research projects, even when that was rare for undergraduates at Four Year Colleges. She remembered to engage her students in SPS, and their

chapter outperformed those of the research universities.

Peggy Dixon remembered to lead. She remembered to lead the SPS students of her chapter and the chapters of her Zone. She remembered to serve on the SPS Council, and to serve the Councilors with whom she worked. She remembered to serve physics teachers everywhere.

Peggy Dixon remembered for SPS. She remembered every form and procedure, when all others who remembered fell away from the office. She remembered how to encourage the office staff through trying times. She remembered to stimulate the advi-

sors and councilors to work hard on behalf of the membership.

Peggy Dixon remembered our history. She remembered to serve as our Historian for over a decade. She remembered to weave together stories relating the work of one generation of SPS to the next. She remembered to put people at ease, as she reaped interviews of insight and wisdom. She remembered the ways things had been tried in the past, opening up new possibilities for our future. She remembered to inspire us with stories of members at their best, doing the work of SPS and Sigma Pi Sigma.

Peggy Dixon remembered.



DR. PEGGY A. DIXON

- ◆ Served as SPS Advisor at Montgomery Community College;
- ◆ Was elected as SPS Zone 4 Councilor beginning in 1975;
- ◆ Was inducted into Sigma Pi Sigma at the University of Maryland-College Park in 1953;
- ◆ Served as Sigma Pi Sigma Consultant in the late 1980's; and
- ◆ Served as Sigma Pi Sigma Historian through 2003.