Edgar Meyer (1935-2015)

I was very sad to learn that Edgar Meyer had passed away in late April 2015. I first met Edgar at MIT in 1966 when he was a post-doc in Cy Levinthal's laboratory where he was working on visualizing protein structures using what was then a very novel graphics system. Over the next few years we worked together to encourage community interest in setting up the Protein Data Bank. Once the PDB was established in 1971, I visited Brookhaven National Laboratory where Edgar and Walter Hamilton invited me to collaborate on the CRYSNET project. The idea of the project was to enable structural biologists without large computing resources access to the then state of the art computer facilities at BNL and to analyze their results on a home computer with graphics capabilities. Throughout his career, Edgar was devoted to utilizing the newest technologies to understand structure.

When Ed retired from the Department of Biochemistry & Biophysics at Texas A & M where he had been a crystallographer for over 36 years, he moved on to the next phase of his career, as a molecular sculptor. His favorite structure (and sculpture) was co-chaperonin (***cen.xraycrystals.org/edgar-meyers-favorite-structure/)***.

When I was asked to write something on Ed's passing for *RefleXions* I remembered that his autobiography had been published in the spring 2014 issue (*pages 38-40*); I quickly realized that I could not tell his story better than Ed did himself. His memoir will also be posted to the ACA history site under the "People" menu item. He will be missed by many of us in the crystallographic community.

Helen Berman

My Time in Alexander Rich's Lab (1972-1977)

Like all laboratories that exist for long periods of time, Alex Rich's lab went through several eras. I was fortunate to be there in the early-middle 1970's, and experienced an irreplaceable period in my scientific development. At the same time it was a transition period: When I got there, large small-molecule structures and the ability to solve them were regarded as important in biological crystallography, but by the time I left, skill at the crystallization of macromolecules was the *sine qua non* in that realm. I came from the first tradition, and have never been really comfortable with the second. Alex was, of course comfortable with any and all approaches to biological structure, and adapted freely as the eras changed. Nevertheless, I was extraordinarily proud when our dinucleoside phosphate crystal structure showing Watson-Crick base pairing between A and U shared the headline of his NYTimes obituary.

When I got to MIT, the lab was in a period of great excitement, because the yeast pheniylalanine tRNA structure was just in the process of being solved. I had nothing to do with tRNA for two years, since it was clear that the credit for that work would not go to a fresh arrival. Having solved a dinucleoside phosphate previously, I jumped instead into projects involving new ones. What took me quite a few years to appreciate was that crystallography was only a part of Alex's lab. There was a large group of molecular biologists working side-by-side with us. Alex's interests in molecular biology, structural or otherwise, were so broad that this group felt quite as much at home as the crystallographers. After a few years of being around the molecular biologists (i.e., drinking with them at the Muddy Charles Pub on campus), I learned how the questions they asked were really quite important. After a few years of Z-DNA crystallography (all after my time), it was clear that in his last years, the biology of Z-DNA was far more central to Alex's interests than the crystallography.

Alex's lab was my second post-doc, and the contrast with my first was like night and day, in that order. Alex largely insisted that his post-docs come on their own fellowships, so he didn't sit around fretting that he was blowing his budget on some of us while we ruminated on things that might lead to ideas. I once heard that he packed us in so tightly that when two people were talking, a third would overhear them and get an idea. Alex often cultivated the image of a buffoon, largely to keep his people from being intimidated; only fools were taken in by the act, he was