



Dr. Homer Alfred Neal

June 13, 1942 - May 23, 2018

Professor Homer Neal was born on June 13, 1942 in Franklin, Kentucky to his parents Margaret Elizabeth (nee Holland) and Homer Neal. From a very young age, he became interested in studying science and reaching out to the world through his ham radio. The latter literally sparked a long career of scientific studies and enormous contributions as he was once struck by lightning while communicating with others in far away lands via morse code.

Dr. Neal started his undergraduate studies at the age of 15 years. He received his B.S. degree in Physics with honors from Indiana University in 1961. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in 1966. He also holds Honorary Doctorates from Indiana University, Notre Dame University and Michigan State University. He is well known for being the Samuel A. Goudsmit Distinguished University Professor of Physics, a University of Michigan alumnus, having served as the University of Michigan Interim President, and as Vice President for Research.

His vast career of accomplishments also includes:

- Conducting ground-breaking research in California, Denmark, Russia and Switzerland.
- Serving as the Dean for Research and Graduate Development at Indiana University (1976-81).
- Serving as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost at SUNY Stony Brook (1981-86).
- Being the principal originator of the group at the University of Michigan that played a significant role in the top quark discovery.
- Being the principal originator of the group at the University of Michigan that helped build and analyze the data from the tremendous particle detector at the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland and France.
- Serving as a Regent of the Smithsonian Institution.
- Being the principal investigator of the University of Michigan Research Experience for Undergraduates Program (REU) Program that allowed U.S. students to experience

working with top scientists during summers at the CERN laboratory

- Serving as a Director on the board of the Ford Motor Company.
- Serving as a member of the Council for the Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture.
- He was president of the American Physical Society (APS) in 2015.
- He was a recipient of the Sloan Foundation Fellowship, Guggenheim Fellowship, the Stony Brook Medal, and the Indiana University Distinguished Alumni Service Award.

He loved to work with wood and was passionate about photography. He enjoyed traveling and lived in many places around the world with his family. Besides Ann Arbor, some of his favorite places included Aspen, Colorado; the Geneva, Switzerland area; and Copenhagen, Denmark. He loved fishing, canoeing, x-c skiing, boating and computing. By far, one of his greatest prides was working with his graduate students, post-docs, colleagues and the fresh inquisitive faces that he encountered in the REU program.

Professor Homer A. Neal, fell seriously ill in February and passed away peacefully on Wednesday May 23, 2018 at the University of Michigan Hospital. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Donna Jean Neal, his children Sharon-Denise and Homer, Jr., and grandchildren Kirsten, Arianna, Nicolas and Lucas. His family will forever remember him as a wonderful father and husband whose global life brought enormous enrichment to their own.

An article about Professor Neal's contributions can be found at <https://www.aps.org/about/governance/election/neal.cfm>

Cemetery

Washtenong Memorial Park
3771 Whitmore Lake Road
Ann Arbor, MI, 48105

Events

MAY 29 Visitation 10:00AM - 12:00PM
Carpenter Road Chapel
2400 Carpenter Road, Ann Arbor, MI, US, 48108

MAY 29 Funeral Service 12:00PM
Carpenter Road Chapel
2400 Carpenter Road, Ann Arbor, MI, US, 48108

Comments



“ When Dr. Homer A. Neal became Distinguished Professor of Physics at UMich he also conferred an great honor upon my father, Samuel A. Goudsmit. I feel a unique, fond kinship.
Esther M. Goudsmit

esther marianne goudsmit - June 21, 2018 at 12:42 AM



“ Anne Monterio lit a candle in memory of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal



Anne Monterio - June 15, 2018 at 05:20 PM



“ I shared an office with Homer under the lecture hall at the west end of the old west physics labs. Not long after we first met, he suggested that we go to Island Park and grill some pork chops, and they were a real treat. His class notes were taken in India ink with Koh-I-Noor drafting pens. It was great to see his career take off, and it was a delight when he came back to Michigan and to re-connect.with him.

I cannot express the sadness that I feel that he is no longer with us. I cherish my memory of him in many ways.

Eric Arnold - June 14, 2018 at 10:43 PM



“ Homer Neal was hugely influential during my Physics graduate school career. He taught me one of my favorite classes: Science Policy. I wouldn't be the person I am without his leadership and guidance. The physics department, and the world at large, is a better place for having had him- and a light has gone out in the universe. It is our responsibility now to follow in his footsteps, and lead by his example. He is deeply missed. Fred Niell

Fred Niell - June 11, 2018 at 07:51 AM



“ Homer was the most incredible person that I have ever met -so intelligent, so friendly,. He achieved so much and made all who knew him the better for the experience. I hope Donna Jean will take time to get in touch with me. She is a wonderful person and I miss have=ing communication with her.
Anne W. Monterio, La Vegas NV

I attached a picture but am not sure how it will appear. Love and hugs, to the entire family.



Anne Monterio - June 11, 2018 at 01:58 AM



“ I had the privilege of working closely with Homer from 1981 to 1985 when he was Provost at Stony Brook. Homer was a wonderful administrator, but more importantly, he was a wonderful human being. He was whip smart, insightful, incredibly patient and hardworking, committed to the highest ideals, and unfailingly kind and humble. A young administrator could find no better mentor, role model, friend, and boss than the one I found in Homer. My heart goes out to his family on their great loss.

Sally P. Springer

Sally P. Springer - June 10, 2018 at 09:07 PM



“ When Homer was Provost at Stony Brook I worked under him as Associate Provost for two years. Never have I known a more effective, hard-working, and honest academic administrator. But even then his great interest was to return full time into the world of physics and he has achieved so much in that world, as well. He was the world's greatest boss and the most humane and caring human being. May he rest in peace!

Louise O. Vasvari - June 10, 2018 at 11:45 AM



“ Few weeks before getting my Ph.D. in Mexico I got a phone call from a Professor that wanted to offer me a job, he was Homer. I accepted the job and end up working for him in ATLAS at CERN for more than 3 years until I resigned to accept a position back in Mexico. I do not have words to say the impact those years did in my life. Homer showed me a different way of seeing science, to appreciate the team work, to

get the best of anyone on the team, and get the things done. I told him when I resigned that he took a young fellow, as he used to call me, from Mexico, and returned back a very different person, a more complete and concerned scientist. He predicted several things regarding my career, and it is like he knew everything back then, or maybe I have been trying to accomplish everything Homer said. I saw him for last time when I attended to the symposium in his honor back in 2014, and at the lunch time he hurried me up so we can have lunch together and talk about several projects he had in mind, and to know how I was doing. He was a great mentor, always worried about you. I learned that very soon when he hired me as a postdoctoral fellow, when one weekend I was working late on the project he just assigned to me, and he arrived to the office from a late flight and saw the pictures of my wife and daughters in my desk. He asked me where were there, and when I said they were in Mexico, he offered to pay their flights and he forbid me to work on weekends while my family were with me.

I will miss you my friend, and I hope soon Jean find the peace you always created with your laugh.

Eduard De La Cruz Burelo

Eduard De La Cruz Burelo - June 01, 2018 at 04:54 AM



“ It is very sad to learn of Homer's passing. He was a wonderful man

David D. Sabatini - May 31, 2018 at 03:40 PM



“ As Homer's last graduate student, I just want to thank him for being such an amazing role model as a world-class scientist and leader for me - always stay humble to learn, be brave to use your imagination, be confident to express yourself, and selflessly inspire and bring out the best of everyone around you.

Tom Cheng

Tom Cheng - May 30, 2018 at 10:42 PM



“ Homer was both my thesis advisor's advisor (Marj Corcoran) as well as someone under whom I did postdoctoral work (with Jianming Qian). Homer was remarkably accomplished in so many things. I learned a lot by watching him handle individuals and groups.

I am very sorry that he is gone.



“ Everyone who knew Homer, or like me, had the privilege of working with him on many projects, became a better person as a result. While a brilliant leader and tireless scientist, Homer was just a very nice person - a gentleman in the traditional way.

He'll be missed in many communities in Ann Arbor and around the world.

Chip Brock
Michigan State

Chip Brock - May 30, 2018 at 02:54 PM



“ Dr Neal was Physics chair during my husband's tenure. I remember him as gracious and caring. So sorry to hear about his passing.
Candace Tickle

Candace Tickle - May 30, 2018 at 09:11 AM



“ Jeremy Herr purchased the Heavenly and Harmony for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



Jeremy Herr - May 29, 2018 at 06:23 PM



“ I am honored and proud to have worked for Homer for nine years and known him as a mentor and friend. He had a huge impact on my life and career and some of the most impressive things on my resume are because of his inspirational leadership and generosity. As an undergraduate, before I met him, I spent a summer doing a math Research Experience for Undergraduates, a nation-wide program he played a large role in founding. Five years later I ended up working for him on the ATLAS Collaboratory Project at U-M and helping out with the CERN REU program. In our efforts to automate the recording of physics lectures, I ended up getting my name on a patent! I had expressed my life-long dream of living in Europe, and Homer made it happen by setting up a knowledge transfer contract with CERN IT for me to bring the technology we had developed at U-M to CERN. Working there made me eligible to

get a UK visa and move to London, where I now live and can say I have accomplished my dream. I have memories of many long lunches spent in China Gate restaurant on South University Ave discussing work, long meetings held with him in between his many trips, and watching in admiration as he would phone up influential scientific and governmental leaders to turn his visions into reality. On top of all that he was an incredibly nice guy and a pleasure to be around, and he cared about my personal well-being as well. I am grateful for the career, the support, and the many memories.

Jeremy Herr - May 29, 2018 at 06:07 PM



“Homer was a very good physicist and a remarkably gifted administrator. He was also a man of great integrity. Homer held important administrative positions and could easily have made that the focus of his career. Instead, (in a decision that I found incredibly laudable) he opted, after a stint as the University of Michigan Interim President, to return to the faculty and focus on physics research, while at the same time continuing his considerable civic engagement in cultural institutions. His love of physics, his commitment to principle and to the search for truth, as well as his remarkable ability to work with and support a wide variety of people were hallmarks of his personality. He has contributed greatly to the University of Michigan and to the larger physics community, and he will be sorely missed.

Robert Savit - May 29, 2018 at 03:50 PM



“It is with sadness that I learned of the passing of Homer Neal. Professor Neal was an excellent physicist, a natural leader as well as a gentleman with ready laugh and an easygoing manner. I worked with Homer during the construction of the ATLAS Muon Endcap Detector when he was the institution representative of the University of Michigan ATLAS Group. Homer Neal made lasting contributions to the ATLAS Project. He will be missed.

Frank Taylor
MIT

Frank Taylor - May 29, 2018 at 03:06 PM



“I had the honor and pleasure of working with Homer on the book about national science policy that he wrote with Toby Smith and Jen McCormack back in 2008. It was one of the most gratifying experiences of my career. Homer had a quiet, gentle manner that belied his incredible wisdom and range of accomplishments. To this day, I have no idea how or why someone with his commitments found so much time to talk with a greenhorn like me about the book, but every meeting was a gift for which I'm still grateful. Sometimes I'd get a bit antsy—I wasn't gifted with his almost

inhuman patience for delving into the details—but he stuck with me, and taught me about the value of curiosity, and of slowing down, paying attention and getting things right. To Homer's family: I'm truly sorry for your loss, and ours. Homer was a wonderful person. Thank you for sharing him with the whole world.

Jim Reische - May 29, 2018 at 01:26 PM



“ I was shocked and saddened to hear of Homer's death. Everything he did made the Physics Department, the University, and the world a better place to live and work in. He hired a significant fraction of the department roughly 25 years ago, including me (and my ex-husband). Thanks to his efforts, I was the first woman professor brought into the physics department, ever. At the same time I arrived Homer also ensured that Jean Krisch be made professor, so then there were two of us. I'm sure that being the first to hire women into the department encountered opposition and I must forever be grateful to Homer. From that time forward he always had a friendly smile for me, wanted to talk physics, took me at CERN to one of the best meals I'll ever had (together with Jeannie), and was one of the kindest people I know. That combination of kindness with being a powerful figure in the physics department and at the university were unique and remarkable. I can only say that I will miss him very much.

Katie Freese

Katie Freese - May 29, 2018 at 11:20 AM



“ Homer was a dear friend and valued colleague. We wrote two books together and loved every minute of our collaboration while he was Provost at Stony Brook University. We shall miss him. Our prayers and good thoughts surround his family.

Jerry and Margaret Schubel

Jerry Schubel - May 29, 2018 at 11:06 AM



“ Everyone at the American Physical Society purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



Everyone at the American Physical Society - May 29, 2018 at 10:44 AM



“ On April 12, 2014, the University presented a symposium to honor Homer, and it was a remarkable event. There were presentations by his colleagues from many aspects of his career, and at the end of each Homer filled in details and answered questions. By the end of the day everyone came away even more impressed and in awe of Homer's contributions and character.

Recordings of these presentations can be viewed or downloaded at <http://leccap.engin.umich.edu/leccap/site/pas4boi2b3zz1ygc39z>

Bob Lougheed

Bob Lougheed - May 29, 2018 at 10:17 AM



“ Homer's personal warmth helped to set the overall positive tone in the department during his Chairmanship. You couldn't pass him in the hall without a warm interaction which usually involved discussing your current work. And if it was near lunch time, you were likely to end up discussing physics at China Gate. These are some of my most valued memories of my time in the department.

Andrew Tomasch - May 29, 2018 at 09:49 AM



“ Applied Physics Family purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



Applied Physics Family - May 29, 2018 at 09:41 AM



“ Tina Wells lit a candle in memory of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal



Tina Wells - May 29, 2018 at 08:36 AM



“ Beth Demkowski lit a candle in memory of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal



Beth Demkowski - May 29, 2018 at 07:00 AM



“ Lu Li and Fei Gong purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



Lu Li and Fei Gong - May 28, 2018 at 10:33 PM



“ I was deeply saddened by Homer's unexpected passing. He had been such an important guide and friend for me at Michigan. He would always drop by to see how things were going and ask how I was doing. That was just how he was, always concerned and interested in his colleagues lives.

Homer had a way of motivating the best in people. He certainly made a significant impact in all he worked on and the Michigan Physics department is much better because of him. He will be sorely missed by all his friends and colleagues. My condolences to Jeannie and the whole family.

Shawn McKee

Shawn McKee - May 28, 2018 at 09:08 PM



“ Barb and I are deeply saddened by Homer's passing, and all our sympathy and care go out to Jeanie and his entire family.

My career would not have been what it has been without Homer. I first met him when I was a grad student intern in the Provost's Office at Stony Brook, and then had the incredible fortune to reconnect with him at U-M, and to work for him in Physics, OVPR, and the President's Office. Homer was a joy to work for, no one could build

and support a team like he did, and I learned more from him than I can possibly say. Whatever success I've had in my administrative career started with him. His vision made for incredible contributions to all the institutions he served and for exhilarating projects for his staff, and I'm grateful for the wonderful work he made possible. The journey with him was truly formative. I will always remember his guidance, his integrity, his generosity of spirit, his great sense of humor, and his infectious laughter.

Barb and I will remember him always, and we hold his family in our hearts.

Gary and Barb Krenz - May 28, 2018 at 08:54 PM



“Homer has had such an important and lasting impact on so many of us, it is hard to know where to start. More than anyone I ever met, he knew the value of patience and encouragement when working with his colleagues, young and old. He quickly sensed the strengths and needs of others and helped them to learn how to do their very best.

The student programs that Homer spearheaded have touched many young lives and continue to do so today. Hundreds of students have now had opportunities they could never have dreamed of without his foresight and tenacity. Most importantly, he taught us to respect and nourish each one of these young minds with a high standard of science and ethics.

While Homer did so much for our field, his wisdom went well beyond particle physics, and his kindness and generosity will never be forgotten. Wherever his busy schedule took him, I know that Jeannie and his family were always closest to his heart. Our thoughts are with them.

Steven Goldfarb

Steven Goldfarb - May 28, 2018 at 08:54 PM



“Valérie, Steve, Ella, and Anthony Goldfarb purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



Valérie, Steve, Ella, and Anthony Goldfarb - May 28, 2018 at 08:26 PM



“ John Foster and Family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



John Foster and Family - May 28, 2018 at 06:16 PM



“ Toby Smith & Jen McCormick, co-authors purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



Toby Smith & Jen McCormick, co-authors - May 28, 2018 at 05:51 PM



“ From Bing Zhou and Suzhou Huang purchased the Beautiful Dreams for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



From Bing Zhou and Suzhou Huang - May 28, 2018 at 04:38 PM



“ Homer was a wise and friendly colleague and a capable administrator who was willing to take calculated risks. Twenty eight years ago he bet on me as the first member of a new astrophysics theory group. The vibrant cosmology and astrophysics group we have now in the Department of Physics is a direct and lasting legacy of his visionary efforts as chair. He left his mark on so many of us in so many positive ways. Our hearts go out to Jean and the family. - Gus Evrard & Kathy King-Evrard

Gus Evrard - May 28, 2018 at 03:36 PM



“Homer’s impact on high energy physics was profoundly important, both at Michigan and around the world. Homer always helped people reach their goals. For me, Homer arranged a spin physics lab and I very much valued our discussions about high energy spin physics. He will be missed around the world. Alan Krisch

Alan Krisch - May 28, 2018 at 02:45 PM



“Joyful Memory was purchased for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



May 28, 2018 at 02:09 PM



“I am deeply saddened by the untimely death of a friend and mentor. While Homer was an outstanding physicist, I will mostly miss his advocacy, mentorship, and support for students and young faculty. He was keenly aware of the shoulders on which he stood to become a successful scientist, administrator, leader and human being and his responsibility and duty to pay it forward. In my role as a Vice President at the American Institute of Physics, Homer was a key advisor and sounding board whenever I needed advice on how to handle a scientifically, socially or politically sensitive issue. His commitment to building upon the legacy of Elmer Imes and Willie Hobbs Moore to shape the face of physics set the example for what it means to be inclusive. His presence will be truly missed – Rest in peace my friend.

James H. Stith

James H Stith - May 27, 2018 at 08:47 PM



“Randall Business Office Staff purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



Randall Business Office Staff - May 27, 2018 at 08:23 PM



“ I came as a new professor to the Michigan Physics Department at the same time that Homer arrived to be its new Chair. In the years that followed I knew him as a warm and generous faculty colleague and as a wonderful boss when I served as Associate Chair for the graduate program.

Homer had a great knack for seeing everything around him with a fresh eye. One morning as I walked up to the Randall Laboratory I found him standing outside the building chuckling to himself in a state of high amusement. I asked him to share it with me and he just pointed to a truck that was parked nearby, with large sign painted on its side that read "Performance Abatement Company."

I will miss him greatly. All my sympathy to his family.

Jim Allen

Jim Allen - May 27, 2018 at 04:33 PM



“ We were shocked and saddened to hear of Homer's death. Home Neal was my first contact with Indiana University. He came to CERN when I was a CERN fellow, in order to recruit me for an assistant professor position. He was the reason that I joined the faculty. I always thought of him a my senior colleague, but as it turns our we were about the same age. His thoughtful and calm approach to working in our field of experimental High Energy Physics was an important influence on me and our students. I have warm memories of our professional lives together, and my wife and I have fond memories of his wife Jean and their children Homer jr and Sharon.

Harold O Ogren - May 27, 2018 at 09:29 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



May 26, 2018 at 01:25 PM



“ Keith and Susan Riles purchased the Days of Sunshine Bouquet for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



Keith and Susan Riles - May 26, 2018 at 10:15 AM



“ My wife and I were deeply saddened to hear of the sudden passing of Homer. Homer and I were graduate students together at the University of Michigan and shared an office together. We got to know each other then and have been lifelong friends ever since. We have seen each other almost yearly at the University of Michigan football games and we live not far from each other in France (near CERN). Over the years, we have had many discussions on physics. Homer always had a very clear mind and a penetrating insight in physics.

Susan and I will miss his gracious friendship enormously and send our love and sincere condolences to his beloved family.

Samuel Ting

Samuel Ting - May 26, 2018 at 07:25 AM



“ Homer was my first graduate student when I came to the University over 50 years ago. In those days thesis students were involved in all phases of an experiment. Homer was a major contributor to the design, construction, execution, and data analysis for his thesis experiment. He excelled in all phases. He wrote a concise, elegant thesis that was soon published in Physical Review with just two authors, he and I.

I watched as Homer made his impressive journey from faculty member to Dean at Indiana University, then to Stony Brook as Provost. I was gratified and happy when he came

back to UM as Physics Chair and then Vice President and Interim President. All the while Homer stayed deeply involved in research and was a member of numerous prestigious boards and committees.

I am proud to say he was my first –and best– graduate student as well as an outstanding colleague and dear friend. I will miss him....

–Michael Longo

Michael Longo - May 25, 2018 at 09:29 PM



“ It was my privilege to serve on the Chairman Search Committee of the Department of Physics that brought Homer back to Michigan. It was my great and continuing pleasure that he became an outstanding Chairman. His subsequent contributions to the University as Vice-President of Research and of Interim President attested to his deep talents as a leader. I will miss him as the warm and caring person he was.

Sam Krimm

Samuel Krimm - May 25, 2018 at 08:04 PM



“ Junjie Zhu and Qiong Yang purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



Junjie Zhu and Qiong Yang - May 25, 2018 at 06:41 PM



“ Basket of Joy was purchased for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



May 25, 2018 at 04:51 PM



“ Godiva Gold Ballotin (36 pc) was purchased for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



May 25, 2018 at 03:52 PM



“ University of Michigan purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



University of Michigan - May 25, 2018 at 03:33 PM



“ Garden of Memories was purchased for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



May 25, 2018 at 03:21 PM



“ Mary Sue and Kenneth Coleman purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Dr. Homer Alfred Neal.



Mary Sue and Kenneth Coleman - May 25, 2018 at 01:22 PM