In Memoriam

CHARLES E. WARREN
1962-2005
Professor Charles E. Warren, a truly outstanding faculty member and rising star at the University of New Hampshire, died in a paragliding accident July 30, 2005, leaving a vacuum that no one will fill in the same manner. Charles had a major impact and lasting impression on all people at UNH during his short tenure. Such was the case with his many friends and scientists across the world. Professor Vernon Reinhold, Director, Center for Structural Biology, recognizing Charles’ scientific prowess, took the lead in bringing Charles to UNH. In Charles’ tenure at UNH, he quickly gained wide peer acceptance and his scientific growth flourished. It was evident to all that Charles would become an outstanding and top ranked scientist and member of the faculty.

He was recently nominated for a named Professorship, this university-wide award, the ‘Class of 1944 Award,’ recognizes outstanding faculty members. Another of our new faculty member said "Charles had that unique natural gift for consensus building - one of the many characteristics that I thought to emulate. He was inspiring. He really took my wife and I under his wing when we arrived." Vaughn Cooper, UNH

"Charles was an industrious scientist and a charming personality both founded on a superb intellect. A short time with him and it was obvious that Charles was someone who truly loved life and the work he was doing." William North, Dartmouth

Charles was born September 17, 1962 in Guildford, United Kingdom, he was the son of Joan (Staples) Warren and the late Charles Peter Warren. He was educated at the University of Oxford, where he received his D. Phil. in 1989. His thesis was entitled "N-Glycosylation in Mice and Rats." After graduation he helped establish the first commercially focused effort in Glycotechnology; Oxford Glycosystems, LTD. He subsequently moved to Toronto to broaden his glycosyltransferase interest and spent his postdoctoral time with Dr. Harry Schachter, (Hospital for Sick Children Research Institute, University of Toronto), and two years later across the street with Dr. Jim Dennis, (Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute, Toronto). Charles moved to the University of New Hampshire in 2002 as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. He resided in Newmarket, New Hampshire on the Lamprey River.

He is survived by his mother Joan Warren of Scotland; a brother, Paul T. Warren of Birmingham, UK; and a close friend Kathy Perreco, of Canton, Massachusetts. He is also survived by his former wife, Marjorie Willoughby, Canada.

Charles Warren was first and foremost a topnotch experimental biologist/geneticist whose investigative research was marked by innovation and thoroughness. In these research efforts, he was an inspiring mentor for his first graduate students (Will Wiswall, Justin Prie, Weston Struve) and undergraduate students conducting research on the structure-function relationships of glycosylation specifically focusing on evolution, animal development and human disease. C. elegans, a eukaryote of scientific interest, was used as his model organism.
Charles was highly dedicated to his teaching as well as to his research. As Charles stated, "I aim to empower and enable students to inquire, discover, and above all, to develop a loyalty to (seek) the truth that transcends personal interest and disciplinary boundaries. I attempt to mentor rather than inculcate, to lead rather than direct, and encourage rather than force. This approach has roots in my high school career, where, as a pupil in a progressive school that had not ability segregation in any class, I saw that my peers achieved greater levels of accomplishment simply because they were never expected to under-achieve."

"Charles was a strong and dedicated scientist who encouraged everyone to do a better job. We were especially fortunate to experience his dedication to empowering young scientists through teachers and graduate students in Project PROBE, a NSF funded GK-12 initiative established at the UNH Leitzel Center. In addition, Charles helped develop a Worm Watch project designed to increase high school teachers’ and students’ interest and understanding of functional genomics. Charles loved those worms (C. elegans) and encouraged all of us to learn more. The Leitzel Center faculty, staff, and affiliates will miss his warm sense of humor and will continue to advance science education with his spirit." Barbara Hopkins, UNH

Charles was an avid alpine climber, experienced paraglider and subsequently an instructor of the sport. "Charles loved this sport. He knew the risks and was prepared to take them" (Harry Schachter, Univ. of Toronto). Air turbulence experienced near Golden, B.C. was blamed for his paragliding accident during an annual competition. Charles's brother, Paul, and their mother, Joan Warren from Scotland, described him as an outdoors lover. "I guess his philosophy was to enjoy things and be adventurous. He liked challenges. The Golden trip was almost an annual event for
10 years for him." Charles spent a lifetime searching for adventure, said his mother. "One knew all the time there was the chance of an accident, but no one expected something quite this tragic. I think he must have been caught unawares. He was very cautious."

"I've known Charles since the very beginning of his paragliding career, endless hikes up and down the hill of Centennial Park, learning to master ground handling as the first necessary step to a steady and safe progression. Charles brought to the sport his characteristic methodology and systematic evaluation of all the factors involved in free flying, first of all, risk management. Flying was for Charles very serious business, to which he devoted passion and intellectual resources. He was a natural instructor, available to anybody willing to discuss their achievements, mistakes, and willingness open to learn. Before he moved to the states to advance his career as a scientist, he was a reference for all pilots of the Toronto area." Florian Ghiban, Canada. Florian and Claus van Bellen were his close friends among his many paragliding friends. Charles had a spirited, positive attitude that seems to run in the family, and was the leader of our group." Kathleen McKenna, Canada

Charles was a friend, colleague, or associate to so many people. His extended professional family and friends around the world join his immediate family in mourning his tragic loss. The memory of such a warm, cheerful, kind, thoughtful, compassionate, adventurous friend, and outstanding scientist will remain with us long into the future.

In memory of Charles, the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture has established the Charles Warren Memorial Fund. Memorial checks should be made out to the Charles Warren Memorial Fund and sent to the UNH Foundation 9 Edgewood Drive Durham, NH 03824. Funds will be used to establish a memorial site on the Durham campus for Charles. Should the total amount of memorial gifts reach endowment level, the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture and/or the family of Charles Warren reserves the right to endow the fund where the funds would then be used for a graduate student scholarship in biochemistry and molecular biology.