Marie Elizabeth Krafft

August 15, 1956 - November 9, 2014

The Life of Marie E. Krafft
There are not enough accolades

Marie Elizabeth Krafft, Martin A. Schwartz Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Florida State University, 58, of Tallahassee Florida, left us on November 9, 2014 after a two year long struggle with brain cancer.

Surviving family members include Marie's husband, Dr. Robert A. Holton and her son, Paul Evan Holton, stepsons Robert L. Holton and David J. Holton, her father Frank J. Krafft, eight siblings: Barbara A. Krafft, Paula Sue Hanson and her husband Mark, Jeanne Y. Krafft, Donald F. Krafft, Martin J. Krafft and his wife Joey, William A. Krafft and his wife Gail, Stephen E. Krafft and his wife Michelle Yahn, Nancy E. Krafft Moyer, aunts Marie Kelleher and Jean D. Short, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Daughter of Frank J. Krafft and the late Pauline B. Krafft, Marie grew up in Alexandria, Virginia. She attended Blessed Sacrament Elementary School, T. C. Williams High School, and Northern Virginia Community College before attending Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), where she earned her B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in chemistry. Subsequently, she was a postdoctoral associate with Professor Gilbert Stork at Columbia University.

While at Virginia Tech, Marie met and later married the love of her life, Dr. Robert A. Holton. Robert and Marie have a son, Paul Evan Holton, and Robert has two sons, Robert L. Holton and David J. Holton, from a previous marriage.

In 1984 she joined the faculty of Florida State University as Assistant Professor of Chemistry and proceeded to progress rapidly through the ranks. Her research received widespread recognition, and she delivered numerous invited lectures around the world. She was internationally known and acclaimed for her seminal contributions in organometallic chemistry and synthetic organic chemistry. Among these were her insightful and innovative investigations of the Pauson-Khand reaction and the Morita-Baylis-Hillman reaction. She was the author of approximately one hundred scientific publications. She mentored numerous graduate students and postdoctoral associates who are listed as coauthors on her publications. Ultimately, she was named Martin A. Schwartz Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry.

Marie also excelled in the classroom. Over the years, she taught a variety of graduate and undergraduate courses. Most notable was undergraduate organic chemistry, arguably the most dreaded and feared undergraduate course at the university. Marie was, however, extremely popular. On one occasion when she had been assigned a different course for the next semester, a large majority of the students petitioned the university for her to continue to teach their next semester of organic chemistry. As described later, Halloween was a special day in Marie's class. In 2009 she received the University Undergraduate Teaching Award in recognition of excellence in teaching.

Outside the university, Marie was a star student in Leadership Tallahassee's Class 24 (2006-2007). And Marie provided a genuine example of leadership. She was a member of the Mary Brogan Museum Board of Directors, Faith

Presbyterian Preschool Board of Directors, Maclay School Board of Trustees, Turn About Board of Directors, and Vice President (and subsequently President) of the MDS Research Foundation. She was directly involved with each of these organizations, and she contributed quiet, but passionate, effort and leadership. She also served in varying capacities at Faith Presbyterian Church. She was one of the “Angels.”

Marie rebuilt and revitalized the science exhibits at the Mary Brogan Museum of Art and Science. She visited many science museums around the country and procured multiple new exhibits for the Brogan.

Turn About is a substance abuse, mental health and behavioral treatment center for adolescents. Marie saw the results from this work and was on the Board of Directors for six years. She chaired Turn About’s main fundraiser, Administrative Assistants Day Luncheon, every year, and each year it has been an even greater success.

Marie was brilliant and understated. She was an unassuming dynamo. When she set her mind to it, she made things happen. She was devoted to her family. Next to Robert, her son Paul was the light of her life. Fearless, she shared with him her endless thirst for knowledge and keen sense of adventure.

So, about fifteen years ago, her involvement with Faith Presbyterian Preschool began. She gave time and money, and that didn’t stop even after Paul finished kindergarten. Her generosity enabled the school to add new resources and materials for the children that enriched the school in the areas of science, math and technology.

Marie could ride a unicycle like no one else. She came to be known as Uni,

the Preschool clown. Marie would arrive completely dressed with makeup, her orange wig, eyelashes and BIG shoes. She would lead the mini circus and the preschool Halloween parade of costumes on her unicycle and entertain the children with magic tricks.

It didn't stop there. Halloween was a special day for Marie. In her clown costume, after Faith Preschool, she would visit the Maclay Lower School. Over the years, she then went to various other locations, including a cancer treatment center, but the tour always ended at the FSU Chemistry Department. She taught her undergraduate organic chemistry class as a clown on a unicycle.

Marie chose to work on the sidelines, quietly and without fanfare. She chose to remain anonymous in many of her endeavors. For that was her way. She was humble.

Marie had a vibrancy and youthfulness that always belied her age by at least a decade. With this energy she became an accomplished skier, sailor, kayaker and unicyclist. It also gave her an unfair advantage in her daily tennis matches against her husband, Robert. It connected her to youth, as a fun-loving aunt to her beloved nieces and nephews, as a step-mother and confidant to Robert's sons, as a wildly popular teacher of undergraduate students, and as an involved parent (and occasional entertainer) at son Paul's school, and of course as a mother to Paul, whom she was immeasurably devoted to and proud of.

Marie handled her disease with incredible bravery. Well beyond her expected survival time she could be found on the slopes at Beaver Creek, Colorado, ducking under the ropes to catch the last chairlift while the rest of her family had long-ago retired for the day. She spoke about her condition with a composure and openness that put those around her at ease and made them

feel closer to her. Her positive impact on loved ones and community cannot be overstated; she will be dearly missed.

She made a difference in the world.

Instead of sending flowers, please donate to:

Faith Presbyterian Preschool
Marie E. Krafft Endowment

-OR-

Turn About
2771 Miccosukee Road
Tallahassee, FL 32308

The service for Marie will be held Thursday, November 13, 2014 at eleven o’clock in the morning at Faith Presbyterian Church (2200 N Meridian Rd, Tallahassee, FL 32303). The burial will follow at two o’clock in the afternoon at MeadowWood Memorial Park (700 Timberlane Rd, Tallahassee, FL 32312). Susie Mozolic of Bevis Funeral Home is assisting the family with their arrangements (www.bevisfh.com, (850)385-2193).

Cemetery Details

MeadowWood Memorial Park

700 Timberlane Rd.
Tallahassee, FL 32312

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

NOV **13**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Faith Presbyterian Church
2200 North Meridian Rd.
Tallahassee, FL 32303

Tribute Wall

LA

I am sad to see that Marie lost her battle. I spoke to her and/or emailed back and forth with her the last year and a half of her battle as my mom was also battling GBM. I was in Tallahassee at the time taking care of my mom. Even through her own battle she was able to offer hope to me and my mom. I know she wanted nothing more than to stay as long as possible for her children and her husband. Please my accept my sincerest condolences.

Rest in Peace Marie,

Laura Carnes

Laura - March 29, 2015 at 08:46 PM

I worked in Dr. Wolfe's lab at VA Tech while Marie got her MS and I got my PhD. One thing I remember about that time … our research required Marie, myself and another graduate student, Jim-Wah Wong, to share a single photochemical apparatus. I worked from 7AM to 5PM, Jim from 3PM to 1AM and Marie from 11PM to 9AM. It was a great time.
My condolences to her family.

Richard Goehring

Richard Goehring - December 28, 2014 at 06:23 PM

DS

I knew Marie Kraft when she was an undergraduate student living next to me on Lucas Drive in Blacksburg, VA. Her boyfriend was a talented wood worker. They broke up, much to my dismay. Later on, I knew Marie when she worked for the Chemistry Department Chair, Dr. Jim Wolfe. After getting her Master's Degree, she switched to Dr. Robert Holton for her Ph.D. They became romantically involved during that time. Dr. Holton was in the midst of a divorce from his first wife, Juanita with whom I worked at the Vet School. Both Marie and Holton moved to Florida where their academic careers flourished. Marie was a quiet person when I knew her at VA Tech. It is sometimes confusing to figure out the choices one makes in life. RIP, Marie.

dshearer2001us@yahoo.com - January 10 at 11:39 AM

KH

I was a phd student at marie's lab from 2006 till 2011 and she was always more than my supervisor(I told her on our last meeting before leaving U.S. that at some point u were treating me like a mom) she was so understanding all the time and so kind. I will never forget u dr. Krafft or Marie as she always wanted us to call her.
Kassem Hallal

kassem hallal - November 15, 2014 at 10:22 AM

AW

Professor Marie Krafft was a mentor, colleague, and advisor, but she was also so much more than that to me. She was the right advisor at the right time in my professional career and life more than once. Our first meeting was one of the most memorable first meetings I've ever had. She was supportive of my professional and life choices. She will be dearly missed.

I wish her family peace and countless fond memories.

Anne Wilson

Anne Wilson - November 13, 2014 at 11:02 AM

Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Marie Elizabeth Krafft.

November 12, 2014 at 07:58 PM

Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Marie Elizabeth Krafft.

November 12, 2014 at 01:33 PM

ME

Marie was a wonderful woman who gave unselfishly of herself. I am blessed to have had her as a part of my life. She inspired and encouraged me to go beyond what I saw. It is not often that the teacher who trains you becomes your friend. However, I am proud to state that, "Dr. Krafft is indeed my friend." Not only did she teach me Synthesis and Organometallic Chemistry, We also broke bread together-meaning we shared the Word of God. Evenmore than that, she came to my son's elementary school dressed as a clown and performed like nothing I had ever seen before. She even rode the small bike!!! I thank God for Marie and shall always cherish our communications forever. Dr. Holton and Paul, thank you for allowing us to experience the beauty and graciousness of Marie Elizabeth Krafft. Often when I texted her, I would finish with a verse of the day.

2 Timothy 4:7-8 King James Version (KJV)

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Your friend and sister in Christ,
Margaret Lyles-Eggleston

Maggie Eggleston - November 12, 2014 at 01:12 PM

DZ

Our thoughts are with Dr.Marie Krafft and her family in this moment of hardship.
Cindy, Sofia, Marcos and Diego Zorio.--

Diego Zorio - November 12, 2014 at 12:43 PM

MT

Thank you for your brilliance--both in intellect and spirit--that you shone upon our world. You were the humble, quiet giver; the constant seeker of answers to others' problems and the source of smiles for so many who needed it. You were an action taker, a questioner, and a mover--the quintessential scientist, with just the right twist of entertainer and the wonder of a child. You proved every day that one can be a brilliant scientist and still have faith. Your beautiful spirit and smile will be missed by so many. Everyone whose life you touched is better for it, my friend.

Meredith Trammell - November 12, 2014 at 12:01 PM

PV

R.I.P. Dr. Marie Krafft! Thank you for being our teacher and our friend! We have many fond and happy memories of you in our lives, including our wedding day!

Jenny, Phong and Brady Vu.

Phong Vu - November 12, 2014 at 11:25 AM

KH

She was a great person I spent 5 years in her lab and she was the best advisor one can wish to have and she has always treated us like friends. May god bless her.
Kassem hallal,PhD

kassem hallal - November 12, 2014 at 12:38 PM

MS

Dear Dr. Krafft, I was very happy to be a postdoctoral researcher at your laboratory. I enjoyed working with you and rediscovered how interesting the chemistry is. I really appreciate your guidance. You gave me a lot of heartwarming memories. I miss you. Thank you sincerely. Masaharu Sugiura, from Japan

Masaharu Sugiura - November 12, 2014 at 08:37 PM

JC

I did not know Dr. Krafft personally, yet the way Maggie Eggleston describe her I felt did. We have been praying for a miracle in her body. I knew that I had to attend her funeral. After attending her funeral, I found that God had done wonder more profound in that He performed a miracle in Dr. Krafft's heart. The miracle of a new birth is will last longer than life itself for it is eternal. I send my condolences to Holton's family. Pray that Christ keeps and comfort you doing this time. He knows what you need in times of sorrow.

John Cooperwood - November 13, 2014 at 02:57 PM

DS

I knew Marie Krafft when she was in college at Virginia Tech. She lived next door to me on Lucas Drive, N.E. in Blacksburg, VA. She had been dating a very nice young man at that time. She was a quiet person, and very polite. I was a graduate student working on my Ph.D. in Chemistry At Virginia Tech. She worked with the Chairman of the Chemistry Department, Dr. James Wolfe, who was also on my Ph.D. committee. She got her Master's Degree under him, then changed major professors. We were in totally different areas of chemistry - she in organic chemistry and me in analytical chemistry. She was far too young to die. Brain cancer is one of the areas that I lecture on, so I am aware of its pathology. You were a good and decent person, Marie. I am sure your students found you to be kind and considerate. Douglas S. Shearer, Ph.D., M.D.

Dr. Douglas S. Shearer - December 20, 2014 at 02:22 AM

JL

I met Marie when we were both grad students at Virginia Tech. I was working for Professor David Kingston and she was in Professor Bob Holton's group. I remember Marie as being one of the most brilliant students that I ever encountered. She was so intimidating in that regard, but also kind and approachable. She went on to an outstanding career at Florida State University, which didn't surprise me in the least. To read of her faith in Christ has really encouraged me. Now I know I'll see Marie again. May God bring comfort to you, Bob, in your indescribable loss. I still tell my students about your taxol synthesis every semester!

Fondly and with highest respect,
Joe LeFevre

Joe LeFevre - December 25, 2014 at 02:57 PM

I came rather late to this "board" and the news of Marie's untimely death. She was a great organometallic chemist, an authority who I greatly valued during my years as Editor in Chief of the journal Organometallics. I also know how much she meant to Bob Holton, a friend whom I worked intensively with during the period 1971-1973. My sincere condolences to the surviving family members.

John Gladysz - March 14, 2015 at 07:56 PM

MC

I too came to this site late, and was very saddened to learn of Marie's death. I was a graduate student with her at Virginia Tech from 1978-79 before I transferred to Univ. of MD. I remember Marie as being so smart but also so nice, and she gave me a great recipe for cheesecake that I have used many times, always referring to it as "Marie Krafft's cheesecake". I lost another close friend to brain cancer so it makes me sad to learn that this terrible disease got to Marie as well. She was a sweet person and I hope she rests in peace.

Melissa Betz Cichowicz

Melissa Cichowicz - March 29, 2016 at 03:58 PM