

## IN MEMORIAM

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**P**rofessor Emeritus Michael Alford Thompson, professor of medical physics for 27 y at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) School of Health Professions, suddenly and unexpectedly passed away on January 2, 2009, at the age of 59. He retired in 2007 from the faculty of the UAB Nuclear Medicine Technology Program after suffering with Parkinson disease for 7 y. His 30-y career at UAB began in 1977 as a radiation safety monitor in the Occupational Health Safety Office. He transferred to the School of Health Professions in April 1980 and began utilizing teaching experience he obtained at Francis Marion College in Florence, South Carolina, where he taught physics and mathematics from 1974 to 1977. In May 1986, just 6 short years after joining the faculty, he was honored with the highest faculty award of the School of Health Professions, the Joseph F. Volker Outstanding Faculty Award. He received the President's Excellence in Teaching Award in May 1993 and twice (1995 and 1997) was a finalist for the highest faculty award given by UAB, The Ellen Gregg Ingalls/UAB National Alumni Award.

These faculty awards are a testament to Michael Thompson's reputation as an outstanding educator. Numerous former students have expressed their gratitude through the years for his ability to "make physics real and that



physics would suddenly make sense to them." He had a certain innate ability to deliver difficult content to students in a way that made it easy to learn. Another aspect of this educator was his willingness to give generously of his time to students to practice problem sets and go over concepts.

In addition to being an outstanding educator for the School of Health Professions, Professor Thompson created and marketed many educational materials through the years. His *Principles of Radiation Protection* video series has been sold internationally. His most recent undertaking was a series of educational PowerPoint CD packages, which included topics on nuclear instrumentation, radiologic physics, radioactive decay processes, and radiation protection. In 1994, he

led the effort for publication of a textbook on radiography entitled *Principles of Imaging Science and Protection*, from the W.B. Saunders Company.

Professor Emeritus Michael Thompson was beloved by the many students he taught over his 30-y career and will be remembered for being a kind, gentle, and generous person who gave all he could to his students to help them in the learning process. Being a talented educator and a dedicated professor devoted to lifelong learning, he will be greatly missed by all who were fortunate enough to be his students.

To honor the contributions Professor Thompson made during his career at UAB, the NMT Program will establish a student scholarship in his name as a lasting remembrance. If you would like to contribute to this fund, please send a check to Katie Davidson Adams, Development Officer, Webb 624B, 1530 3rd Ave. S., Birmingham, AL 35294-3361, made out to "UAB SHP," and write "Michael Thompson Scholarship Fund" in the subject line.

**Norman E. Bolus, MPH, CNMT**  
*UAB Nuclear Medicine  
Technology Program  
Birmingham, Alabama*