



A LEGACY 'BIGGER THAN TEXAS'

PHYSICS PROFESSOR HATHCOX REMEMBERED AS A FRIEND TO STUDENTS

His students remember him as a professor who cared about them – not just as physics students, but as people.

His colleagues remember him as a leader and conciliator – someone whose presence was always soothing and never disruptive.

Shortly after being diagnosed with leukemia in July, physics professor Kyle Hathcox died at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. A campus memorial service in his honor was conducted on the first day of fall semester classes.

"He was one of the most tenderhearted people I ever met," said Brian Taylor, a 2005 Union graduate. "One thing I will never forget. Right after graduation I was walking along and all of a sudden this big guy just started hugging me. It was Dr. Hathcox. He was even tearing up. He cared so much for his students."

Taylor is a Doctor of Philosophy student in medical physics at M.D. Anderson and was able to visit Hathcox only a couple of hours before his death.

A Texas native, Hathcox began teaching at Union in 1974. He left in 1988 for a six-year stint at Gordon College, then returned to the Union faculty in 1994. His wife Sandy is a part-time education professor at Union.

"I could tell that he and Sandy loved each other very much," Union physics professor Bill Nettles said. "He was almost like a teenager around her."

Union physics professor David Ward called Hathcox a great campus leader who practiced skillful diplomacy among people with differing viewpoints.

Ward also said Hathcox was instrumental in starting both the physics and engineering programs at Union.

"We give thanks for Dr. Hathcox's years of

faithful service to Union University and for the lives of students and colleagues who were touched by his teaching and service," President David S. Dockery said. "We are also thankful for Dr. Hathcox's strong faith in Jesus Christ, and while we grieve his loss, we do so with the promise and hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Barbara McMillin, associate provost and dean of instruction at Union, worked closely with Hathcox when she was dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. She described him as "amazingly reliable and thorough," and as someone who handled all situations with grace.

"Kyle Hathcox was a leader who led by example, and he led in a very quiet, dignified and effective way," McMillin said.

Rob Krauss is a 2007 Union graduate who majored in physics, and a graduate student in medical physics at Vanderbilt University. Krauss said Hathcox's influence on his life was profound.

Krauss especially remembers one of the last lengthy conversations he had with Hathcox.

"I sat in his office probably for about an hour," Krauss said. "We talked about science and faith, and how science is a way that God has pointed to himself, and how the world has forgotten that."

Krauss recalls many times in his experimental physics class, when they would be waiting for the results of an experiment, that Hathcox would tell the students personal stories about his experiences, studies and life.

"And we would eat it up," Krauss said. "He was doing the one thing that he loved most at Union, which is teaching."

"He was an example of what people come to expect from professors at Union." ♦

Kyle Hathcox Memorial Scholarship

Union University has established the Kyle Hathcox Memorial Scholarship for physics majors and minors. To further recognize Hathcox's contributions to the university, Union President David S. Dockery announced that the physics and engineering offices have been renamed the Kyle Hathcox Memorial Suite.

Please address contributions to the Kyle Hathcox Memorial Scholarship, Office of University Relations, Union University, 1050 Union University Drive, Jackson, TN 38305