Princeton University

Honors Faculty Members
Receiving Emeritus Status

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The biographical sketches were written by colleagues in the departments of those honored, except where noted.

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Faculty Members Receiving Emeritus Status

Morton Daniel Kostin

Morton Kostin will transfer to emeritus status on July 1, 2013, following forty-nine years on the regular faculty in Princeton's Department of Chemical Engineering, known as the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering (or CBE) since 2010. Mort spent his entire faculty career at Princeton, and holds the distinction of longest service by a regular faculty member in the CBE department's history, having educated literally generations of Princeton students.

Born in Chicago in 1936, Mort received his bachelor's degree from the Cooper Union and his master's and doctoral degrees from Harvard University. He joined Princeton as a research associate, later becoming a Sloan Postdoctoral Fellow and a visiting lecturer. He was appointed as assistant professor on July 1, 1964, promoted to associate professor in 1968, and promoted to professor in 1976. Mort's longstanding research interests have been in chemical kinetics, particularly in deriving fundamental equations that underpin the observed rates of chemical reactions. A special interest was in understanding the rates of chemical reactions when the reactants were not near thermal equilibrium, so-called "hot atoms" (or molecules).

Today, Mort is perhaps best known to Princeton students as an instructor in MAE 305/CBE 305/EGR 305, "Mathematics in Engineering I," our foundational course in differential equations. This course, required for CBE and mechanical and aerospace engineering concentrators, also draws students from other engineering and natural science departments and frequently has enrollments in triple digits, which few other courses in engineering can boast. Mort also frequently taught undergraduate courses in thermodynamics, graduate courses in thermodynamics and applied mathematics, and graduate elective courses in his specialty areas of numerical methods and in the applications of quantum theory.

To his colleagues in the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering, Mort's long service and sharp memory provide an almost encyclopedic knowledge of past procedures, dating back over the tenure of eight department chairs. His unflagging pursuit of a generalization of transition state theory, on which one could often find him working on weekends and evenings, has been legendary. We wish Mort the best in his retirement.