

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.

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Faculty Members Receiving Emeritus Status

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Robert Pascal Jr.



Bob Pascal was born in New Orleans in 1954. He attended Louisiana State University, where he ran track and graduated magna cum laude with a B.S. in biochemistry. Entering Rice University on a National Science Foundation predoctoral fellowship, he studied demethylation reactions in cholesterol biosynthesis and received his Ph.D. in biochemistry in 1980. After two years at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a National Institutes of Health postdoctoral fellow, he joined the chemistry faculty at Princeton as an assistant professor. He received an Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellowship in 1987, and he was promoted to associate professor in 1988 and to professor in 1998. After more than 26 years at Princeton, he retired in 2009 and accepted the Bernard Villars Baus Chair in Chemistry at Tulane University.

Bob's principal research interests are in the areas of biochemistry (enzyme mechanisms, design of enzyme inhibitors, and natural product biosynthesis) and physical organic chemistry. In recent years, his work centered on the synthesis and structural characterization of very large organic molecules and molecules whose geometries involve the extreme twisting of molecular groups at the peripheries of a central group—with shapes like molecular propellers. His synthesis and crystallization of very large molecules is especially well known—in recent years, for example, he synthesized and structurally characterized C₂₉₄H₁₉₈, a molecule that holds the record for having the largest number of carbon atoms ever induced into forming a crystal.

Bob is unquestionably one of the most interesting people you will ever meet. He has an infectious passion for life, and will, in a characteristically good-natured fashion, debate any topic with

anyone, any time. His chief outside activities are reading, running, cycling, photography, and amateur astronomy, and he has what he calls a “financially unhealthy” affinity for consumer electronics. All this, coupled with his Google-pedic knowledge of chemistry and affinity for the pyrotechnic, made him an immensely popular lecturer in general chemistry.