



Tuesday, April 22, 2003

Paul Tomboulian

Paul Tomboulian, distinguished professor of chemistry, is recognized for his preeminence in university service and his long and successful record as a scholar and teacher. Appointed as a charter faculty member in 1959, Tomboulian has made a significant contribution to the creation of Oakland University's academic programs and procedures and to the study and teaching of environmental chemistry. By every measure, his accomplishments merit the rank of Distinguished Professor.

Originally appointed as the university's first and only chemistry instructor, he went on to serve as chair of the growing chemistry department for 35 years, an astonishing record of success. During this time, the chemistry department's faculty, course offerings, research programs and laboratory spaces grew and developed into their current levels of excellence. Tomboulian is credited with several other "firsts" – he received Oakland University's first research grant, initiated the first undergraduate research program and introduced the first science-based environmental health major in Michigan.

Apart from these contributions, Tomboulian is widely known and admired for his pioneering work in ecological studies. His interdisciplinary scholarly work and teaching in analytical chemistry, biochemistry, toxicology and environmental health are inseparable from his service to the community as a consultant and advisor to countless public agencies. As a scientist working in this public domain, Tomboulian has brought reasoned authority into the often-passionate discourse about environmental protection.

By all accounts, Tomboulian's enthusiasm for the application of science to the public arena is reflected in the zeal with which he approaches his teaching, as several generations of students have attested. Indeed, hundreds of his students have gone on to significant careers with local, state and national environmental and regulatory agencies.

As a charter faculty member who has personal knowledge of the entire history of the university, Tomboulian has also undertaken the monumental task of creating an oral history of Oakland University by making audio and video records for the ongoing OU Chronicles Project.

SUMMARY

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