

DR. RICHARD SHINEMAN

It's hard to think about the chemistry department without thinking of Richard Shineman, who served as first chair of the department and guided its early development. Yet his illustrious career in that scientific field had a bit of an inauspicious start.

As a child, Shineman wanted a chemistry set, just like his older brother's. When he finally got one, the 6-year-old accidentally gassed himself with chlorine. "I was down to the doctor's very fast," he recalls with a chuckle, "to stop myself from coughing." Luckily for Oswego, Shineman's love for the discipline was not daunted by the incident, nor by a burn in college from anhydrous nitric acid, that marked his hand with a scar still visible today.

Shineman's passion for chemistry and teaching began at Deerfield Academy, where the headmaster's wife taught chemistry. He would later share with Oswego students her catchy mnemonic jingles. Shineman followed his uncle and older brother to Cornell for a bachelor's degree, after which he served in the U. S. Army. He earned his master's at Syracuse University and doctorate at Ohio State, where played clarinet in the orchestra.

Oswego President Foster Brown hired Shineman in 1962 to be the first chair of chemistry. Before that, all the sciences were lumped together in one

department. While the discipline was housed in Piez Hall, one of Shineman's first duties was to collaborate with the chairs of the physics and math departments as well as colleagues at SUNY Central to design the building that would become Snygg Hall.

Modest about his own accomplishments, Shineman takes his pride in the colleagues and students who populated the department he led. He calls hiring Professor Emeritus Gus Silveira, "probably one of the best things I have done for the college." Together they worked on earning American Chemical Society accreditation for the department.

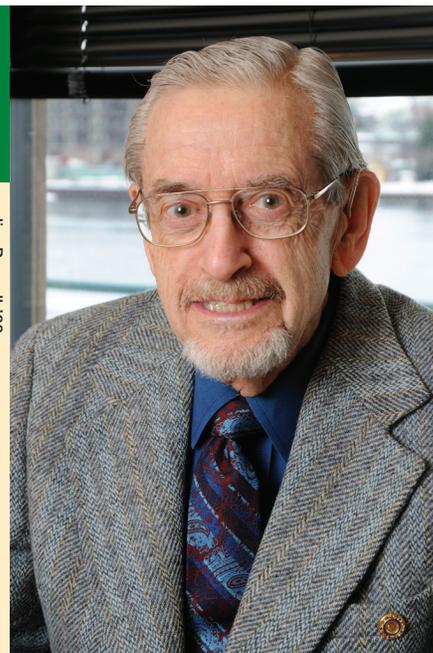
Shineman likewise takes satisfaction in chemistry majors who have gone on to fine careers in the sciences, like **Corliss Varnum '79**, who became a medical doctor in Oswego.

The department head loved to play pool at the Student Union, as an informal way to interact with students.

Shineman enjoys stamp collecting. Combining his vocation and avocation, he once made an award-winning stamp exhibit of the 109 chemical elements known at the time.

During the turbulent late '60s and early '70s, Shineman developed a course, "Chemistry and the Public Concern," which is still going strong today. "We tried to answer the student unrest which at

Jim Russell '83



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that time was permeating college campuses," Shineman recalls.

Shineman's legacy is the Freshman Chemistry Scholarship, with four awarded to incoming Oswego students each year. Philanthropy is important to Shineman, who has served on the Oswego College Foundation board of directors, a post now filled by his wife, **Barbara Palmer Shineman '65**. He also serves on the Rotary Foundation Committee. An active member of Rotary International, both in Oswego and the Shinemans' winter home in Naples, Fla., he was named a Paul Harris Fellow for his generosity.

Another important part of Shineman's life is his faith. An elder in the Presbyterian Church, he admits, with a twinkle in his eye, a side benefit of his devotion to the church: That is where he met Barbara while the two served on a music committee together.

A part of the college's history through the founding of the chemistry department, and a part of its future through the Freshman Chemistry Scholarship, Richard Shineman's name is synonymous with the sciences at Oswego.

— Michele Reed