In Memoriam: William H. Wing

School of Journalism
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William H. Wing, a professor emeritus of physics and optical sciences who helped design the School of Journalism's current facility, died Aug. 4 after suffering a heart attack. He was 80.

Wing, the longtime partner of retired School of Journalism Director Jacqueline Sharkey, specialized in atomic, molecular and optical physics. He was an experimentalist who created two fields of spectroscopy that opened new ways to examine atoms and ions.

Wing received his Bachelor of Science from Yale University in 1960, his Master of Science from Rutgers University in 1962 and his doctorate from the University of Michigan in 1968.

"As an undergraduate, Bill was torn between majoring in English or physics," Sharkey said. "He chose the latter because of his urge to explore fundamental structures and forces."

Wing had a lifelong interest in the impact of science and technology policy on society, which led to fellowships from the American Association for the Advancement of Science to act as a science adviser to the U.S. State Department and Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C.

Among his other honors, Wing was named a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellow and an Alexander von Humboldt U.S. Senior Scientist.

From 2002 to 2004, Wing played a crucial role in the development of the School of Journalism when it moved from the Franklin Building to the Louise Foucar Marshall Building on North Park Avenue.

Wing designed all the Marshall laboratory and seminar rooms, and he worked with the University to ensure that the wiring, data ports and wiring-closet capabilities would enable the school's infrastructure to expand as technology evolved.

"Without Bill's architectural skills, deep knowledge of computer systems and commitment to enabling students to have the best possible educational opportunities, the School of Journalism would never have been able to create an experiential curriculum that could evolve over time," said Sharkey, professor emeritus, who led the school from 2000 to 2011.

Wing also oversaw the school's technical support operation for several years after the move to Marshall.

"Bill was dedicated to ensuring that journalism students received the best education possible? then and now," said Carol Schwalbe, director of the School of Journalism.

No services are planned.