The Renaissance Man

James and Maureen Gorman
Emeriti Faculty Luncheon
Honoring

Kim Mumme’

Saturday, October 17
11:00 am to 12:30 pm
Wells Conference Center, Rm 3

Hosted by the College of Engineering
at the University of Maine
Kim Mumme’ - The Renaissance Man

Kim entered Lawrence College originally as a music major with plans for an illustrious symphonic career. After one year he switched from music to physics, which explains his enduring love of both engineering and music. Kim and his wife, Alice, went off to study at the University of Nebraska - he in physics and she in music. Kim soon went to work in the paper mill industry and landed a job at Kimberly Clark and then in research.

Kim came to the University of Maine first in 1963 as an IBM lecturer in chemical engineering with a specific purpose in analog computer simulation and retired as Professor of Chemical Engineering in 1997, serving for a total of 34 years at UMaine. In addition to teaching, Kim ran the chemical engineering co-op program, served as honors council representative, and as advisor to the national award winning AICHE student chapter.

A true Renaissance Man, Kim started playing principal bassoon with the Bangor Symphony in 1964 and held that position until 2006. He spent four sabbaticals in Norway at the Technical University in Trondheim - two on fellowship from the Royal Norwegian Research Council; one on Fulbright lecture-research fellowship; and one on a simple sabbatical. It was during this time in Norway where he happened upon a chance to try out and become a substitute bassoonist in the fully professional Trondheim Symphony. He soon came to the realization of how fortunate he was to have gotten into engineering and college teaching and not the symphonic career he once dreamed about.

Kim continued to be involved in both engineering and music as well as a host of other interests. He co-authored a text book on advanced process control with a Norwegian and received the UMaine Pulp and Paper Honor Award in 1997. He toured Maine and played in the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. Kim also loves speed and competition, having enjoyed sailboat racing, sport cars, and piloting airplanes, as well as playing a variety of sports.

We are honored to celebrate the career of Kim Mumme’ today with all of you. As you will read in this booklet of memories, Kim Mumme is much loved and respected by his students, colleagues, in engineering as well as by his friends and fellow musicians. Thank you all for helping us to honor Kim Mumme!

Dana Humphrey, PhD, P.E.
Dean of Engineering
Kim and I arrived at the Department at about the same time and we shared many common interests in process control and computer activities that were very strongly involved with analog computers. So, we had a lot to talk about.

We also shared many recreational interests like skiing, sailing, biking and football. Back in the “good old” days of the department we used to have Department picnics and after lunch and several beers Kim and I would join the undergraduates in a game of touch Football. This was the chance for the students to get even for all of the Cs and Ds as well as the overnight stands spent in getting the lab and design projects in on time. Get even they did, after the games it would take a week to recover. It was a good way to get to know our students.

Beyond the specifics of the academic program Kim and I both shared the idea that the work of the world is done by Bachelor Degree engineers and they deserve the best education we can give them. Kim’s work with the Coop program and the Undergraduate Committee represented a very significant contribution to the quality of the departments under graduate program.

The process control work which he did with a faculty member at The University of Trondheim was good work. They published a book on their efforts.

I am pleased that Kim is being recognized for his contribution to the Departments Program. Congratulations!

William Ceckler
Professor Emeritus Chemical Engineering

When I came to Maine in 1977, Kim was already a senior member of the department. However, I didn’t meet him for a year - he was away on a sabbatical in Norway. When he came back, we worked together to develop an undergraduate "option" in advanced Process Control. This was very unusual for the time, and our graduates were in demand in industry. This option was popular for a number of years, but eventually the students’ interests shifted to other directions, and we moved on. Kim took over the beginning ChE course, and made it from a dreaded requirement into a course that the students genuinely enjoyed.

The university went through some wild gyrations in its curriculum requirements in the late ‘80s. I don’t think many of us understood what was happening ... I certainly didn’t ... but Kim kept on top of it, and was able to tell us how it affected us and what to do about it. He also kept track of the departmental curriculum. Whenever I didn’t know what to tell an advisee, I’d send him or her down to Kim’s office. Kim probably should have been paid overtime for this. I, for one, certainly appreciated it.

Kim and I also share a love of music, and in fact, performed together several times - he in the Bangor Symphony and I in the Oratorio Society. I suspect, however, that many more people were aware of the First Chair bassoon player than of just one more member of an amorphous group of basses in the back row of the chorus.

Kim, in his quiet, unassuming way, contributed a great deal to the Chemical Engineering Department over the years. I'm glad to see him being given recognition for all of his work.

John Hassler
Professor of Chemical Engineering
Virginia Tech
It gives me great pleasure to reminisce and write a few lines remembering all of the many contributions that Kim Mumme made to the Chemical Engineering Department at the University of Maine. Kim was easy to work with and a wonderful colleague. When he retired several years ago, and is sorely missed by the members of the Chemical Engineering Department.

I started my career at the University in the September 1974 at which time Kim was well established in the Department; being a major contributor to the teaching component of the Department, especially in the area of process control and computer applications. Kim has not only an excellent engineer, a great teacher but also a true "Renaissance Man" with great interest in the humanities and music. I greatly admired Kim's diverse interests which I believe served the students in the Department very well.

Kim was truly a master teacher having initiated the very popular Process Control Option within the Chemical Engineering curriculum. He was also the co-op coordinator for the Department and initiated the PPa 264 Pulp and Paper Technology Course under an NFS sponsored CAUSE grant. The PPa 264 course is still given in the Department to all chemical and biological engineering students interested in performing a co-operative work experience at one of the paper companies within the state. In addition to his teaching and research interests related to process control, Kim devoted countless hours to the Honors program, student advising and counseling students on their course of study; especially as it related to appropriate humanities and social science courses designed to improved critical writing and conceptual thinking skills.

Kim provided excellent leadership as Chair of the Curriculum Committee for several years. When a thorny problem arose related to the curriculum; or a question related to student transfer of credits was an issue, I always consulted Kim to determine the appropriate solution to the problem. Lastly, Kim was a great colleague always willing to help and do his fair share to keep the department operating smoothly. I am extremely grateful for all of Kim's kind assistance in putting together the ABET accreditation report in the early 90's, which added greatly in securing a six-year accreditation for the Chemical Engineering Department.

Kindest Personal Regards

Joseph M. Genco
Professor Chemical Engineering

Kim is a man of few words. Here are three lessons that he taught me.

1. Teaching: Every student in your classroom matters.
2. Research: Modeling is fine, validation counts.
3. Service: CoOps work, because it gives more relevance and larger context to the ‘book knowledge’ in our classrooms.

Kim did this the old fashioned way- just by being himself and keeping the open door habit. Kim has a way of shaping others, when he is done they think they did it themselves.

Hemant Pendse
Chair of Chemical and Biological Engineering Department

When I started serving as advisor to undergraduate students, Kim was my primary resource for many of the advising questions I had. From the technical option sequences to the humanities courses, he always had the right answers. His extensive knowledge of the courses and rules helped the advisors in the department do a better job.

On the personal side, Kim is an avid gardener. When I bought a house and dabbed into gardening, he provided many sound advices.
He directed me into the right path of getting a Troybilt tiller. I am delighted that Kim is being honored for his many contributions to the department.

Albert Co
Associate Professor Chemical Engineering

Kim and Alice were very kind to my wife Ginger and I when we first moved up here. Being the same mix of professions, engineer/musician, they knew what we were facing. They had us over for dinner a few times and were especially helpful in helping Ginger get her foot in the music community. When Kim was on one of his sabbaticals they invited us to visit them in Norway, which we did. We had a great time touring both by car and on skis.

As an academic advisor I relied on Kim as the Undergraduate Coordinator quite often for answers to questions about University policies and graduation requirements. I think we were all very grateful for the good work Kim did with the undergraduate program. I wish him continued happiness and good health in his retirement.

John Hwalek
Associate Professor of Chemical Engineering

I was quite pleasantly surprised when I received the postcard announcing your selection as this year’s honoree at the Emeriti Faculty Luncheon. Unfortunately I will be unable to attend, although if I were anywhere near New England I would find my way to Orono on the 17th. I know you will have many former students and colleagues in attendance to share the day with you.

As I think back on my days at UMO and the ChemE department, there are two members of the faculty that always come to mind: Kim Mumme and Lowell Zabel. You and Lowell influenced me well beyond my days at Maine. You were a role model to me on professional behavior and clear thinking. You also cemented my love of computers and computing that led me to many career decisions and changes over the years. I have many fond memories of my days in the computer lab, “back in the days” of punch cards and trying to squeeze a Fortran program into 16 or 32K of memory.

Since I graduated in 1972 my career has always been about computers. I did OR work at Rumford and Baton Rouge for Ethyl Corp, worked in the oil industry in Wichita for a number of years doing more OR and then ran several data processing departments. In 1981 I got one of the first IBM PCs. Eventually I moved to the Washington DC area in 1987 as a consultant for Coopers & Lybrand, which became PwC, which was bought by IBM, where I still am today. All those computer bugs you nurtured in me almost 40 years ago still have me in their grip.

So, thank you Kim. You made a difference for me, as I’m sure you did for many others. That’s one of the reasons you are being honored. I wish you all the best.

Robert Eckman
BS ChemE’71, MS Systems Eng’72

Professor Mumme’ helped me in many ways. He went to bat for me, and he is a great teacher. Ken is a symbol of the University’s goals.

Dan Grant
Chemical Engineering ’81
Believe it or not, Kim was quite athletic back in the 60s, and some of us would play touch football in the field house, whenever it was available on Saturdays.  

My story about him deals with one game that we were playing on such a Saturday. I went out for a long pass and Kim was guarding me on defense. I think I caught the ball but I also caught Kim’s elbow in my rib. He played quite aggressively.

It was a few weeks later that the rib pain became unbearable and an X-Ray showed that my rib had been broken. Unfortunately, the emergency room staffed applied tape directly to my skin with no gauze of other protection. When they later ripped off that tape, the skin came off with it. That was worse than the broken rib. I didn’t wear a shirt for some time, even in the Maine winter.

I don’t think Kim ever knew about that so this may come as a surprise. But please make sure to tell there are no hard feelings. I got over it last year.

I’m so glad that his plan to teach worked out for him. That was my plan too but fate (and industrial success) intervened. Please give him my best regards and tell him I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

Dick Lessard  
MS 1968, PhD 1970

Kim won’t remember the impact he had on a specific P Chem class in 1964. Dr. Dunlap was the professor and insisted that 2nd semester, chemical cell computations be calculated out to 8 places beyond the decimal point! Now, this was still the time of slide rules; needless to say once you had 3 hours of P Chem lab, you had 4 hours of slide rule activity and I am talking smoking slide rules.

Coincidently, the pulp and paper computer lab had been initiated the year before and 2nd semester the class was introduced to the fortran language on the IBM 1620... you see where I am going. The computation program was written with a “little help” from Kim whose mantra and eye twinkle was not that far from the students at the time. The punch cards were made, the data was fed into the machine and in an electronic wink we had the computations... now for Kim’s part, “Why don’t you take the computations out to 12 places?” Dr D never did comment on the “extra work” nor did we receive any additional credit as I recall. Thanks Kim, it gave us all back time for other subjects; you know “other subjects.”

Stephen Prout  
College of Engineering and Science ’85
I suppose that it might be enough of a tribute to a professor that after close to 30 years since graduation you still think about him on occasion but there’s more than that in this case.

As it turns out, Kim was my academic advisor in the chemical engineering program between 1972 and 1976, so I had cause to visit him on a regular basis in his 2nd floor office even when I didn’t have him for a class. I even invited him and his wife to my wedding in 1976 (they didn’t attend but I still recall the red wooden salt & pepper shakers that they gave us as a gift).

The point of this is that I know that while I was just one of thousands of students that passed through the department during Kim’s tenure there, I never had the feeling that I was simply one of the students in that long line. He always took time to render whatever help he could with whatever problem I was wrestling with, and always provided me with sound academic advice. One on the reasons I took 16 credit hours in economics while at Orono was that he recommended concentrating our electives in one area that I was interested in rather than taking the introductory level course in a variety of subjects. Good advice – I enjoyed it and it has been useful over the years.

Kim was one of the professors in the department that helped me to embrace the principles of engineering – to reduce a problem to a set of manageable tasks and accomplish those tasks in an orderly way. That I think was his most important gift to me, more than any specific technical knowledge that I may have learned as well. His teaching helped me to become a productive engineer and along the way to provide a good living for myself and my family. Thanks for your help.

I also remember that Kim rightfully awarded me with one of the only two C grades that I received at Orono (the other was in the second semester of organic chemistry). This was in process control, and despite his best efforts I could not wrap my head around the detailed mechanics of process control. But I enjoyed taking the course. Kim never surrendered in his efforts to plant the at least basics of process control in my head.

Time has shown it wasn’t his fault – process control is still a little bit too much of a black box to me. I don’t know if he’ll recall this but we were assigned a simulation problem using analog computers.

My partner Randy Davis and I chose to model the tide levels in the Bay of Fundy as a precursor to tidal generated power (a hot idea back in the 70s). We got the simulation to work; the tides went up and down on a regular basis. What also happened was that if you let the program run long enough, the tide levels kept dropping until eventually the bay went empty (obviously not a desired real-world outcome). No matter what we tried, we could not make the program stop doing that, so our elegant solution during our final presentation to Kim was to show that the program modeled the tides but stop the program before the drop in sea level became glaringly obvious. I don’t know if we fooled him (unlikely) or that he was being gracious but he let us pass.

My best wishes to you Kim as you are honored at the Emeriti Faculty Luncheon – a well deserved honor.

Michael Webber
BS ChE in 76
MChE in 77
5th Year Pulp & Paper Certificate 77

We first crossed paths in 1971 when I attended the High School Junior Program sponsored by the Pulp & Paper Foundation. Your leading edge knowledge of using computers for process control and your clear love of life single handedly convinced me to study chemical engineering and specialize in computer process control. I was so fortunate to have you as my advisor.
from the Fall of 1972 to the Spring of 1976 while I earned my bachelor degree.

With today’s technology, no one would believe the old Big Blue (IBM 1800) that we used with punch cards to run simulations and control problems. With your support and guidance, I was able to realize my “dream” career which was to develop and implement computerized control schemes. I will always remember and thank you for your support.

Randy Davis
BS ChE 1976

Music

Shortly after my move back to Maine in 1989, I saw Kim Mumme at the reception after the Bangor Symphony Orchestra played Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5 at the Maine Center for the Arts. The performance that afternoon under Maestro Torkanowsky was stunning. Luckily for me, Kim was getting ready to take another sabbatical to Norway and asked if I was interested in covering for him while he was away. After listening to that performance, I was very interested!

That was the start of along collaboration and friendship as colleagues in the Bangor Symphony Orchestra. It was truly a pleasure to work with Kim, as he shared his knowledge, experience and friendship over the 17 years we played together. Hopefully, he has as many good memories of our time together as I do. Thank you Kim!

Lynn P. Flagg

Kim has been an important part of the music community throughout his career at the University of Maine. He generously gave of his talents on many occasions over the years to support projects for which I served as music director and conductor, Frequently gratis when there was no budget.

My earliest memory of Kim was the first orchestra rehearsal for a student production of Mozart’s opera The Marriage of Figaro back in the early seventies when I first arrived here. It was probably the first full length opera production with a student cast ever produced at the University of Maine. Newly arrived from Salzburg, Austria, it was certainly my first here. The oboist sounded the A for tuning. Kim honked his A and announced “Close enough for opera!”

Lud Hallman
Professor of Music

I remember when Kim Mumme joined the symphony. He didn’t audition; he just joined, because at that time we’d take anybody that could hold an instrument. He held an instrument that had a lot more wood to it than the clarinet and he showed up for rehearsal.

What I remember most about Kim is that when we had our bus trips, and we had many of them, on the way back we would always load up the bus with beer. And I think he had the record for the most empty cans of beer. Like the bassoon is hollowed out and has a lot of capacity, so does he. I have fond memories of playing and being with him and his wife Alice and I certainly wish him a very long and successful retirement.

Bill Miller
History of the
James and Maureen Gorman
Emeriti Faculty Luncheon

Since 2000, the College of Engineering at the University of Maine began what has become one of our most enjoyable traditions where we celebrate the career of a distinguished emeriti faculty member.

So far, we have honored the following emeriti faculty:

2000 Dick Hill (Pajama Party) Mechanical Engineering
2001 Waldo Mac Libbey (Showtime) Electrical Engineering
2002 George Greenwood (Cowboy Roadshow) Civil Engineering
2003 Bill Ceckler (Confessions of an Outdoorsman) Chemical Engineering
2004 Jerry Harmon (Physics of Subjective Reality) Engineering Physics
2005 John Lyman (No Jokes Required) Mechanical Engineering
2006 Carleton Brown (Three Ringed Circus) Electrical Engineering
2007 Karl Webster (Super Engineer) Engineering Technology
2008 Wayne Hamilton (First Associate Dean) College of Engineering
2009 Kim Mumme (The Renaissance Man) Chemical Engineering

As a part of our annual event, we compile a book of memories and stories from each honoree’s students, colleagues and friends in their department. We ask people to send us special (especially humorous) memories for the booklet, which becomes a treasured keepsake full of great stories and memories. We then print up the stories in a booklet, which we pass out at the luncheon.

The luncheon is held during homecoming weekend at UMaine, so there are plenty of other activities to make a trip to Orono worthwhile.

Thank you for attending this year’s luncheon to honor Professor Emeritus Kim Mumme.

The College of Engineering
James and Maureen Gorman
Emeriti Faculty Luncheon Honoring
Professor Emeritus Kim Mumme’

Thank you to all who have shared memories of Kim Mumme’s career at UMaine for this booklet.