

Fred Pregger (1924 - 2020)

The NJAAPT has been informed that a long time member Dr. Fred Pregger passed away this past May. Those of us who remember Fred knew him as a gentle man with a good sense of humor, a love of teaching, and an ardent supporter of the Section.

Fred was born in Paterson and spent time in the US Army as radio instructor. After his discharge he attended Montclair State Teachers College and taught high school in Wayne and West Orange. His talents for teaching were recognized and he accepted a position at Trenton State College, now The College of New Jersey. There he taught physics, astronomy, and teaching methods and eventually was named chair of the science department.

My connection to Fred Pregger started in the late 1980's when I learned he was a classmate at Montclair of my fellow physics teacher and mentor at Dumont High School, Sel Greenzeig. I shared numerous stories of their college days and he was always interested in how his former classmate was doing.

Fred along with fellow TCNJ colleague, Judd Fink, established a tradition which is continued to this date by the NJAAPT - they were the driving force behind the Physics Olympics. Today, John Valente, Jessie Blair, and Nancy Michaelson continue a legacy of providing physics student throughout New Jersey with the opportunity to compete against each other every January.

There is one final comment to make about our member and that is that Fred was always willing to participate in demonstration shows, whether they were sponsored by the NJAAPT or the NJSTA. The programs gave him the opportunity to share his knowledge and love of physics with everyone, no matter what their age. Personally, there was an excitement in the room when he and John Johnston had the chance to share the expertise in demonstrating physics concepts.

The NJAAPT has lost a treasure, but we are grateful that we had the great fortune to know Dr. Fred Pregger.

Ray Polomski