

Obituary Notice:

Paul Grobstein (Associate Editor, JRP, 2005-2011)

Anne Dalke and the Editors



Paul Grobstein, Eleanor A. Bliss Professor of Biology at Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania, USA passed away Tuesday, June 28, 2011. Since Paul came to Bryn Mawr in 1986, he taught courses ranging from “Introductory Biology” and “Philosophy of Science” to “Evolution of Stories” and “The Brain and Education.” Paul founded the [Summer Institutes for K-12 Teachers](#), which brought hundreds of local educators to campus to consider new ways of teaching science and math. He served as chair of the Biology Department and was instrumental in the establishment and success of the [Center for Science in Society](#) at Bryn Mawr College.

According to his colleagues, Paul’s greatest legacy may be his absolute conviction and devotion to the notion of breaking down barriers between disciplines and building interdisciplinary interactions. Paul’s extensive cross-departmental teaching is evidence of this commitment, as is the [Serendip](#) Web portal which he co-founded in 1994. Designed as “a gathering place for people who suspect that life’s instructions are always ambiguous and incomplete . . . and hence need to be continually examined and rewritten,” *Serendip* has a world-wide audience and is linked to many other Web sites in the areas of neurobiology, cognitive science, science education, and science and culture. Paul said his many interests and activities shared in common “a strong belief in the capabilities of the human brain to explore and create, both individually and collectively, in ways that achieve improved understandings of the human condition and open new avenues for its further development. And a belief that modern information technology, including the Web, is a distinctive and valuable tool for the extension of human understanding.”

Anne Dalke, a colleague at Bryn Mawr College said, “Paul was a man who loved thinking about and playing with ideas. He thoroughly enjoyed both telling stories and evoking them from others, in order to urge revision (both of the stories and of the people telling them!). He had a particular interest in what he called ‘slippery brains,’ those that change states frequently and rapidly, making it disconcerting to others and (sometimes?) to oneself. He was the smartest person, deepest skeptic, and most profound believer in others’ potential that I have ever had the pleasure to know, or the joy to work with.”

We are very sad and consternated about Paul’s passing. We and the entire Editorial Team of JRP will remember him with affection and gratitude for his contributions to the journal.

Note. [Bryn Mawr Biologist Paul Grobstein, Scientific Storyteller, Dies at 65](#), Bryn Mawr Web site, dated July 7, 2011.