



Tributes to Ben Patrusky from friends and colleagues

On the occasion of his retirement as Executive Director and the inauguration of the Patrusky Lecture, November 2013

To a wonderful man, with an astounding intellect. We wish we could be there to honor you in person, but for now we are raising a glass in spirit!

—*Jim and Katy Barber*

My favorite uncle, thinker and conversationalist.

—*Emily Benedetto, niece*

To a beloved uncle, brilliant scientific mind, and great friend.

—*Michael Benedetto, editorial group leader, Draftfcb Healthcare*

I have known and vastly admired Ben since his days at the AHA. Just as I could never quite figure out how he made a living in the years after that, he always seemed to live better than I did. He wrote long learned articles about science subjects that, I confess, completely eluded me. Although we lived no more than three miles apart, our friendship was crammed primarily into an annual week in Bar Harbor. Ben praised the New Horizons meetings highly, with a contagious excitement, and I believed him, year after year after year. I treasure Ben's friendship. I always spelled Patrusky correctly.

—*Mark Bloom, friend and colleague*

Oh the feasts you have prepared for us, Ben! Each one a careful blend of tantalizing topics, speakers who deliver new insights while whetting our appetites for more, and cutting-edge research—all steeped in your own brand of genteel hospitality and infused with a generous portion of camaraderie. But best of all, you make every one of us feel like the most important guest at your table, year after wonderful year.

—*Nancy Blount, assistant director, society communications, American Chemical Society (and longtime fan of New Horizons)*

Ben has made the world of science writing so much smarter. And he's made ME smarter. I think that every time we have a board meeting—and I think how lucky I am to have had the opportunity to learn from him.

—*Deborah Blum, CASW board member*

To call someone a "gentleman and a scholar" is usually just a cliché, but in Ben's case, it's the perfect descriptive phrase. May his style, his smile and his scientific acumen continue to inspire CASW for years and years to come.

—*Alan Boyle, CASW president and science editor at NBC News Digital*

For decades, Nancy and I have admired Ben for his knowledge and wit and enjoyed his company. Our common watering hole and great jazz place used to be Bradley's at University Place, where we all met Judy for the first time many years ago. Fortunately we occasionally run into each other at the Knickerbocker, not as great in jazz but better in food. Ben and Judy, we feel fortunate to live so close and stay close for many years to come.

—*Nancy and Harry de Waart, good old and dear friends*

Ben, you are forever peerless. Many careers (certainly mine) blossomed from your influence. The artistry of your words, from magical New Horizons briefs to elegant *Mosaic* features, moved and inspired me and countless others. Your tireless pursuit of science novelty is unmatched. Perennially, you turned each fall into a movable feast anticipated as eagerly as a holiday. Out of science and writing you forged fast, enduring friendships. Thanks for everything, my friend.

—*Tony Fitzpatrick, freelance science writer, public information officer 1987–2009*

Met Ben in 1983, when I was a newbie science writer at UC Irvine. He was on campus recruiting researchers for New Horizons but also spent time with me, learning of my aspirations and suggesting resources to achieve those goals. This outreach to a newcomer is so characteristic of Ben “giving back to the profession.” Over the years, it has been a privilege and pleasure to assist my colleague and friend in subsequent efforts.

—*Lynne Friedmann, editor, ScienceWriters*

Since I met Ben at my first CASW meeting, circa 1987, he has personified the thoughtful craft of science writing. What a legacy he has left for us!

—*Richard Harris, CASW board member*

Through the example of his own lucid, sharp-edged writing, Ben has shown all of us how to tell a story about the sciences. As presiding genius of CASW, he has helped us to develop our own tastes and talents. It was my pleasure to know him also when he was the presiding genius at the liveliest table on the backside of the bar at the Lion's Head.

—*Brian Hayes, freelance science writer*

The bartender said to the neutron, “For you, sir, there will be no charge.”

—*Fred and Susan Herzog, dear friends*

It's hard to remember when I was not connected to Ben, from the first time he walked into my office at *Mosaic* in 1976 or 1977, to the last dying breath 15 years later of a magazine we had both devoted a good part of our lives to, and the 20 years since then. He was a magnificent colleague and a warm friend—and if warm spots in the heart count, still is.

—*Warren Kornberg, friend and colleague*

To Our Renaissance Man—Poker, piano, salsa dancing and SCIENCE! Love, Liz and Marshall

—*Liz Levy and Marshall Marcovitz, poker buddies*

Ben was the brilliant organizer of the science content of the Cutting Edge of Science series for television journalists run by the Scientists' Institute for Public Information. Nobody knows science and the scientific community as well as Ben. He has always put his considerable talents towards the public understanding of science, and the world is better for it.

—*Alan H. McGowan, former president, Scientists' Institute for Public Information*

To the best boss one could have. To the best person as a friend, and fun to be with always.

—*Diane and Buddy*

Sigma Xi identified Ben as a luminary in science communication and conferred upon him the distinction of honorary member. But it is he who ennobled us. He has been a beacon of illumination to the world community, and he has held high a bright light for the public understanding of science. He is truly legendary, and it is a great privilege to add to the many tributes he will be receiving for his life's work—a rich, rich heritage. Thank you, Ben.

—*Linda Meadows, president, Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Society*

For nearly my entire professional life, Ben has been a role model, inspiring science writer, and friend. He is the Daniel Boone of science communicators, an intrepid scout who has led generations of journalists to new vistas of delightful research. I have so deeply enjoyed and appreciated his inimitable personal warmth, humor, and wisdom.

—*Dennis Meredith, acolyte*

From my start as a novice in 1979, Ben always made me feel that my questions were legitimate and important. (I now know otherwise!) From him, I learned that writing about science and technology could actually be entertaining and fun, yet educational and informative. Ben is one of the most brilliant writers I know, able to converse with intellectuals in fields as diverse as electrical engineering to biotechnology, and then present the topics in simplified, exquisitely written prose. The field of science writing has indeed prospered through the dedication, guidance, mentoring and talents of Ben Patrusky.

—*Lynn Nystrom, friend for more than 30 years*

Ben has always been ahead of his time. He was succeeding as a freelance science journalist long before the rest of us were forced to join him. Smart, knowledgeable and engaged in the niche he covers, I consider him the preeminent role model for those of us who are committed to "carrying the fire" in sharing the wonder, promise and peril of science.

—*Miles O'Brien, CASW board member*

Ben: Your deep and steadfast commitment to the founding purposes of CASW will leave an indelible imprint on all of us—new, old and past members, and on the organization itself into the future. (Your irrepressible sense of humor will help too!)

—*David Perlman, San Francisco Chronicle, CASW board member*

We would like to congratulate Ben for his outstanding achievements and his contributions to the science community.

—*Betsy Regier, sister-in-law, and Gale Regier*

From Ann Arbor (my first New Horizons meeting, in 1975) to Bar Harbor, and in dozens of other inspiring venues, Ben has been for me and countless others a noble, creative, charming, benevolent Pied Piper of science, luring us into lifetimes of exuberant experiences in explanatory journalism. That deeply resonant "New Yawk" voice and state of mind cajoled—no, seduced—generations of scientists and science writers into stretching their brains and skills in public, in print, on the air, on the "net," and on the record. Thank you, Ben!

—*Joann Rodgers, Johns Hopkins University, CASW board member & past president (1990–97)*

Brilliant, Elegant, Nonpareil, Peerless, Accomplished, Trustworthy, Respected, Urbane, Scintillating, Knowledgeable and Youthful: BEN PATRUSKY. It has been my great privilege to work with this amazing Renaissance man on all things CASW and to have him as my friend. Deepest congratulations, Ben, on your magnificent career!

—*Cristine Russell, CASW immediate past president*

To a man of letters and a man of science as well as a fond friend: Gifted with winged words, great wit and a good heart. Kudos on the Patrusky fund—well done, well deserved.

—*Jack Schwartz, old City College friend*

To my dear Ben: A colleague at college, a buddy at the beach, and a lasting and loyal friend. My deepest congratulations to a man who is the essence of wit, wisdom and grace.

—*Mort Sheinman*

For more than three decades, Ben Patrusky has been the single most important person in science journalism. As CASW's leader and organizer of the New Horizons symposia, Ben served as a one-man bridge between the brightest scientists at the cutting edge of research and the science journalism community. He showed us what science journalism could and should be. Because of Ben, science journalism in our era was vastly better than it otherwise would have been.

—*Tom Siegfried, CASW treasurer*

No one has been more dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in science writing than Ben; no one has been more congenial or, to tell the truth, more influential in pursuing that goal. Like no one else, Ben embodies science writing as a craft and culture. On a personal basis, I've been privileged to call Ben my friend but I would know and admire him from any station in the universe.

—*John Galbraith Simmons, friend since 1996*

To Ben Patrusky: A dear friend, a most interesting dinner companion, a visionary leader of a diverse cadre of professionals, and a man of humor, compassion, intelligence and foresight who has made our lives so much better by being a part of them.

—*Kenneth P. Trevett, president, Texas Biomedical Research Institute, and founding chair,
CASW national advisers (...and Barbara's spirit)*