

# ALAN STUART WAGGONER



Alan Stuart Waggoner was born in Los Angeles in 1942 and grew up in the Denver area enjoying the mountains in all seasons. He graduated from the University of Colorado in 1965 and moved to Oregon where he got his PhD in chemistry in 1969. After postdoctoral work at Yale University, Alan taught at Amherst College until 1982 when he joined the Carnegie Mellon faculty. He left CMU in 1992 to help create Biological

Detection Systems, a Pittsburgh biotech start-up. He returned to CMU in 1999 as director of the Molecular Biosensor and Imaging Center, which, under his leadership, became world renowned for its expertise in biochemistry, genetics, dye chemistry, and imaging. Alan is the holder of 27 patents and the recipient of many awards recognizing his fundamental contributions to the development of fluorescent-based detection systems, which have advanced research worldwide. Additionally, he was scientific co-founder and chief architect of Sharp Edge Therapeutics, a Pittsburgh biotech company discovering therapies for genetic diseases.

Alan's expertise took him on adventures in the Atacama Desert in Chile on a NASA grant to hunt for life in an environment similar to Mars. His love for adventures and the American West took him with his family and friends: golfing, skiing, hiking, backpacking, camping, rock-hounding, photography, and road-tripping. He especially enjoyed the road-trips he took with Karen, his wife of 58 years.

Always the teacher, he continued teaching OSHER courses on the beginning of the universe and the origins of life after his retirement from CMU in 2018. Most importantly, he taught the beauty of nature, the magic of science, and the values of kindness, gentleness, persistence, humor, and love to his family and everyone he touched.

He died peacefully at home surrounded by family on Tuesday May 21.

In addition to Karen, Alan is survived by children Shemariah Little (Waggoner) and Eben Waggoner, grandchildren Melina and Marc Little, and sisters Diana Davies and Teri Nebeker, and of course his beloved cats, Junior and Minnie.

Friends will be Thursday, May 30 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., followed by a service at **JOHN A. FREYVOGEL SONS, INC.** ([freyvogelfuneralhome.com](http://freyvogelfuneralhome.com)) 4900 Centre Avenue at Devonshire Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests contributions be made to:

Hospital Albert Schweitzer, PO Box 110091, Pittsburgh, PA 15232, or Pennsylvania Organization for Women in Early Recovery, 907 West Street, Second Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15221.