



**IN MEMORIAM  
KENNETH K. CHEW  
October 29, 1933–September 24, 2022**

The National Shellfisheries Association (NSA) lost Ken Chew, one of the true pioneers in shellfish biology and aquaculture, on September 24, 2022. What follows here is a brief biography and an overview of his contributions, followed by remembrances from friends and colleagues associated with the NSA, the University of Washington, and the shellfish industry he loved and professionally supported with energy, enthusiasm, and commitment for over 50 years.

Kenneth Kendall Chew was born in Red Bluff, CA on October 29, 1933. He was the sixth of seven children. His father Dick Chew immigrated to the United States in 1916 from Fow Shek (or Fushi) Village, Doushan Town, Taishan City, Guangdong Province. Ken often worked in the family restaurant but had a love for the outdoors. During his early years, he would fish for trout in local streams during the spring and summer, and duck hunt in the fall and winter. In the fall of 1951, he ‘accidentally’ registered at Chico State College. He accompanied three of his friends who went to register for classes. While standing in line with them, the registrar asked him why he was there, what was his high school GPA, and put him down as a potential registrant. In 1955, Ken received his BA from Chico State College, graduating with a degree in biology, and was hired as a seasonal aide for California Fish and Game. With an interest in salmon biology, he studied at the School of Fisheries at the University of Washington (UW) in Seattle, where he became involved in shellfish work at the Point Whitney Shellfish Laboratory in Hood Canal. Ken was immediately struck by the abundance of natural wild shellfish such as Pacific oysters, Manila clams, mussels, and available spots to fish for rockfish and crabs. After one summer at the laboratory, it was clear his new passion was shellfish. He went on to complete his MS (1958) and PhD (1962) at the University of Washington School of Fisheries before joining the faculty [now the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences (SAFS)] in 1962. During his 42-year academic career with the University of Washington, Ken was appointed Interim Director of SAFS in 1996 before being named in 1998 as Associate Dean of the College of Ocean and Fishery Sciences. He served the University of Washington in this capacity until his retirement in 2004.

Ken’s influence on the shellfish industry was not confined to the Pacific Northwest. He provided advice and consultation to many countries, including Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Thailand. In 1980, Ken joined a delegation of other scientists representing the United States as Aquaculture and Fisheries Specialists in the People’s Republic of China. At the time, the People’s Republic of China was reopening its society to the West after 25 years of isolation during the Cultural Revolution. In 1987, Ken was recognized by the Institute of Oceanology, Academia Sinica in Qingdao Province, China as a visiting scholar and permanent advisor, the second one ever given at the time, and awarded a life appointment as visiting professor by Shangdong College of Oceanography, only the 10<sup>th</sup> appointment ever given at the time.

Ken was instrumental in establishing the USDA Western Regional Aquaculture Center (WRAC) at the University of Washington in 1987. He also directed the WRAC twice, between 1987 and 1996 and again between 1998 and 2004. He was honored with the Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching Award from the College of Ocean and Fishery Sciences in 1993 in

recognition of his long teaching career at SAFS. Over this same period, he was appointed by then-Governor Gary Locke as a member of the Washington State Fish and Wildlife Commission. Governor Locke, recognizing the impact that Ken had in the State of Washington regarding the shellfish industry, announced the establishment of an endowed professorship in his name that initiated grant awards in 2004. Donors included the family of Victor Loosanoff (UW, 1927) and many others. Today, the Chew Professorship provides an opportunity for scholars to come to UW SAFS to collaborate with faculty and students on aquaculture research.

Ken was integrally involved with both the NSA and the World Aquaculture Society (WAS). He served as President of both the NSA (1971–1972) and the WAS (1977–1978). Ken was awarded the inaugural David H. Wallace Award from the NSA in 1982. He was later recognized as an Honored Life Member by both associations – the NSA in 1989 and the WAS in 1995. In 2015, the NSA honored Ken (and his shellfish colleague and close friend, Neil Bourne) with the establishment of the Neil Bourne-Kenneth K. Chew Award to recognize individuals for their outstanding contributions to education, outreach, extension, aquaculture, or shellfisheries. Ken also played a significant role in establishing and preserving the Pacific Coast Section of the NSA (NSA-PCS), which now meets regularly with the Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association (PCSGA) at their annual meeting in September, serving as an excellent forum for people from industry, government, tribal, and academia to come together and discuss shellfish work and problems. In September 2023, the NSA-PCS and the PCSGA jointly established the Kenneth K. Chew Student Research Grant, a competitive grant that provides \$1,200 annually to a graduate student to support their research and contribute to the field Ken Chew pioneered. Ken will be remembered fondly by many for his enthusiastic leadership associated with annual forays onto the streets wherever the NSA annual meeting was gathering to preside over an expansive dinner at a local Chinese restaurant (The Ken Chew Chinese Dinner), a staple of NSA meetings for many years.

As an academic, Ken published nearly 100 papers in scientific journals, technical reports, conference proceedings, book chapters, and special columns for trade publications. Although his research focus was shellfish biology and aquaculture, his work also touched on primary research on biotoxins and the design of environmental baseline studies utilizing benthic invertebrate communities for bioassay potential. In 2015, the Outstanding Individual Achievement Award was bestowed upon Ken by The American Institute for Research Biologist (AIFRB) for his record of shellfish research and major teaching contributions in his 40+ years at UW.

Working closely with NOAA and the Puget Sound Restoration Fund, the first conservation hatchery on the West Coast was named in Ken's honor as the *Kenneth K. Chew Center for Shellfish Research and Restoration*, and established in 2013 at the NOAA Manchester Research Station, Northwest Fisheries Science Center in Manchester, WA. The Center is a partnership between industries, tribes, State localities, and Federal agencies, and provides scientific expertise and a specialized facility to support the research and production of native oysters and other Pacific Northwest living marine resources.

Almost any interaction with Ken Chew over his long career at the University of Washington was noteworthy for his unbridled enthusiasm for shellfish, teaching, and research, for all the students he mentored and cared for deeply, and for the vast group of friends and colleagues with whom he interacted globally. Ken was instrumental in involving his many graduate students with the NSA, encouraging them to attend meetings, meet other scientists and students, and give (often their first) scientific presentations. He was also instrumental in bringing the Pacific Coast Section of the NSA to life, as he believed that the West Coast was getting short shrift for an Association that in its early days was more East and Gulf Coast-centric. On the teaching side, surely for many students taking Ken's shellfish course, the experience of shucking and eating their first raw oyster, while standing as a class group huddled for warmth in mud up to their ankles during a cold and wet afternoon field trip, remains a highlight of their lives.

Through all of his professional accomplishments, Ken was passionate, did not preach, and lived his beliefs. He found time serving the church and community whenever possible and was a devoted family man. Ken and his wife, Maegan (May) raised four children; Curtis (Patti), Gerald (Joyce), Matthew (Aimee), and Marcella.

I first met Ken in 1978 as a prospective graduate student at the UW School of Fisheries and later worked with him as a graduate student in the mid-1980s. I came from New England wishing to study shellfish and he was “the man” on the West Coast. I was one of many of Ken's students but on a much shorter list for his doctoral students. Ken was an important mentor and a wonderful friend. He encouraged me to prolong my graduate career at the School of Fisheries to have a family and found a shellfish business – my first customer in fact followed a phone call Ken made to a friend of his who owned a shellfish wholesaler in Seattle. I think that will be Ken's enduring legacy. He knew everyone and was so generous with his time and contacts to the benefit of his students and the shellfish industry generally – he was always advocating for us in the industry, whether it was through his work with the WRAC, the NSA, the WAS, or the WDFW Fisheries Commission. Ken particularly focused on integrating his students' work with the PCSGA – always encouraging his students to think about research that could benefit the shellfish industry. At shellfish meetings, as he beamed with pride, he would often ask all his former students to stand up – and there were a lot of us!

Ken had an infectious manner of bringing his unique brand of enthusiasm to life. We cotaught Ken's course in Molluscan Biology in the mid-1990s for a number of years, where he was busy with the WRAC and planning for the new SAFS building – our meetings to organize lectures were always fun, and I learned a lot about what he felt was important for students to learn about shellfish and aquaculture. I will treasure his frequent phone calls over the many years – just to check in... “*Hey Jotho!... what's going on...!*”. Ken was on the very short list for receiving a lifetime supply of Baywater Shellfish oysters and clams – needless to say, he used his account frequently and there may actually be ruts from our delivery truck dropping oysters for him and May and family at their Seattle home. There, he and May had raised their four children.

In the end, all I can say is that I was so privileged to have a long friendship with Ken Chew. So many conversations stand out for me – and so many stories. He was a larger-than-life presence in my life, and I will deeply miss his humor, wisdom,

storytelling, and especially his enthusiasm for life. I learned later that his Christian faith was a central pillar in his life as he devoted much of his days to his church following his retirement. Ken cared about Puget Sound, its resources, and how to conserve and build upon a place where we can still enjoy food from the sea – believing strongly that research was the key to both the shellfish industry and conservation worlds having the capacity to adapt to the changes we were all seeing. Others have expressed similar words, and I can only amplify the impact he had. Thank you, Ken, for your many contributions to the lives of so many of us.

TRIBUTES TO KEN CHEW AND HIS INFLUENCE OVER THEIR LIVES AND CAREERS FROM FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES

*Ken Chew was a gentle force of Nature and I was blessed to call him a good friend and valued colleague for over 40 years. His gentle manner, vast knowledge, and willingness to teach and share were a gift to all. Ken had an infectious enthusiasm for life, friends, students, and shellfish, and an accumulated wisdom that should never be forgotten. I remember fondly and miss his phone calls; all began with “Hey Babe – how’s things?” – each ended with my learning something new. He was a genuine gift and pioneering spirit, the likes of which we will not see again. – Sandra E. Shumway, University of Connecticut*

*Ken was a visionary, a valued colleague, and a mentor and friend to many. His fierce advocacy for sustainable aquaculture has had considerable impacts on industry, and at the state, regional and federal levels – at least some of those impacts are based on the relationships that Ken developed with a number of state and federal legislators and regulators, seemingly effortlessly. The impacts of his passion for shellfish and the achievements of his research program still resonate, and his legacy is reflected in and respected by the vibrant community of shellfish researchers and shellfish growers on the west coast and elsewhere in the US.*

*Others with a longer history of working with Ken can better describe some of his specific professional achievements. I only knew Ken for less than 20 years, far less than the many people who are also grieving at Ken’s passing. I didn’t work alongside Ken. In 2004, I became his successor as the Executive Director of the Western Regional Aquaculture Center (WRAC) which has been hosted by our School because the start of the national RAC program in 1987.*

*It is no exaggeration to state that Ken’s efforts were instrumental in the establishment of the USDA/NIFA-funded national RAC program. He was tireless in promoting his vision for a regionally based funding program in which members of industry could work together with the research and extension communities to overcome barriers to the responsible development of the domestic aquaculture industry. Why UW, among five regional centers, is the only host institution that is not a land grant university (to the chagrin of some of those institutions at that time) is in itself a testament to Ken’s disarming passion and advocacy for the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences, for UW and for all things aquaculture.*

*Ken was gracious and hospitable during my early days at SAFS, gently taking me under his wing during our travels. On those trips, I quickly learned that Ken had a fondness for free coffee at specific I-5 highway rest areas (which gave me instant heartburn), that he was both a gourmet and a gourmand, a keen chef with a prodigious appetite for all kinds of shellfish, an avid hunter and fisherman, and a devoted family man.*

*Ken introduced me to many of his contacts in Olympia and in Washington, DC. What struck me at that time was the dazzling diversity of folks, from young staffers to legislators who greeted Ken warmly, sometimes with a hug. Ken, I realized, was blessed with a prodigious memory of everyone with whom he interacted, and the uncommon, but characteristic empathy he displayed to all was at the core of his being.*

*Ken’s legacy within the school lives on with the Professor Kenneth K. Chew Endowed Professorship. Established in 2004 through the contributions of many donors from all walks of life, Ken’s passion and support for younger scientists is manifested in his desire that endowment funds were to be used to support visits of eminent shellfish researchers to the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences where they could spend quality time with younger researchers.*

*Ken’s remarkable efforts in developing a world class program of shellfish research at the SAFS and his efforts to help develop the US shellfish farming industry have been recognized through many awards. In honor of Ken’s work, the Kenneth K. Chew Center for Shellfish Research and Restoration was opened in 2014 at the NOAAs Northwest Fisheries Science Centers Manchester Research Station. Several of our faculty and students are undertaking collaborative research at this facility.*

*During the first WRAC meeting that I chaired as Director, a member of one of WRAC committees told me that I had very big shoes to fill. By that time, I knew Ken well enough to laugh and inform that person that anyone who thinks they could fill Ken’s shoes was either stupid, delusional, or both. That’s as true now as it was then. – Graham Young, University of Washington SAFS; former Executive Director, Western Regional Aquaculture Center*

*The Puget Sound Restoration Fund (PSRF) is forever indebted to Ken Chew for building a vast network of former students who fanned out and developed careers as shellfish farmers, tribal shellfish leads, water quality specialists, and scientists. They are leading lights, who have generously partnered with the PSRF to pioneer shellfish restoration practices in Puget Sound – every step of the way. The first time I heard about Ken was through his former student Duane Fagergren, one of my early guides to the wonderful world of shellfish. Though I didn’t know Ken personally, I sure as heck picked up on the magic of both Ken and shellfish. Another of Ken’s students, Hal Beattie, pointed me toward restoring Olympia oysters in the early days of the PSRF. It became our first core program as an organization, and we’ve been at it because 1999. Not to be outdone, another of Ken’s students and acolytes, Joth Davis, jumped on board as science advisor to help develop both our Olympia oyster and pinto abalone restoration programs. Upon receiving our first NOAA grant for Oly restoration in 2001, yet another former student of Ken’s at NOAA, Kay McGraw, stepped in to help in every way possible. Not long after, as the PSRF developed various programs to help restore historic shellfish growing areas, Ken himself was there to cheer us on through every conceivable channel. As I think back on it, everywhere I turned, either Ken, friends of Ken, or students of Ken were there to give a helping hand. In 2011, Ken’s former student Bill Dewey pulled me in to help launch the Washington Shellfish Initiative, an outgrowth of the National Shellfish Initiative. The core group included another of Ken’s long-time associates, Teri King. One of the recommendations of the Initiative and the 2012 Blue Ribbon Panel on Ocean Acidification was to start a conservation hatchery. Fortuitously, Ken’s good buddy Connie Mahnken was running the NOAA Manchester Research Station when PSRF started snooping around for a good hatchery location. Thus, in 2013, we collaborated with NOAA to launch the first conservation hatchery on the West Coast, aptly named the Kenneth K. Chew Center for Shellfish Research and Restoration. Long-time colleagues of Ken’s, Walt Dickhoff and John Stein, helped build out the hatchery collaboration. Figuring*

out how to sustain the hatchery financially became the next interesting hurdle. Remarkably, Bill Dewey was heading up a workgroup for the Marine Resources Advisory Council (MRAC) that recommended the hatchery for Legislative funding, and MRAC took up the banner. There to help usher the request along were Rich Childers, who worked with Ken when he served on the Washington Fish & Wildlife Commission, and Angie Thomson, who, amazingly, met her husband through Ken Chew at UW. There are literally a thousand other Ken Chew stories and connections that I could mention. It is no exaggeration to say that Ken essentially created the conditions in which the field of restoration aquaculture could develop here in Puget Sound. It's as if he was setting out guideposts and seeding the world with just the right mix of people, and just the right dose of enthusiasm to expand the world of shellfish possibilities. Reflecting on my own experience, one of the first Puget Sound-related projects I ever worked on in 1987 was with Connie Mahnken and Joth Davis, friends of Ken. Moving forward in time, October 2023 marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chew Center, a busy hub of shellfish activities thoroughly infused with the spirit of Ken. So, even though I was never actually a student of Ken's, he had a hand in shaping the full arc of my career. – Betsy Peabody, Puget Sound Restoration Fund

Ken Chew inspired me to learn and apply what he taught to real world situations ... he taught me to be inquisitive, collaborative, and open to new information about how marine systems change. I spent three of my four years at the UW on the upper campus in biological oceanography, and mostly struggled to keep my head above water (pun intended). Those rugged years were 1966–1969. I talked to various counselors and was usually disappointed to hear “you just need to get the basics of calculus, organic chemistry, physics etc., under your belt before you can start applying these principles to your major field. That will be evident in graduate school.” I didn't have time or money, or maybe patience for classroom work.

Near the end of my third year, a new, young counselor said, “Sounds like you chose the wrong school at the UW. You should look into Fisheries Science.” The first person I met was Ken Chew. He was positive and effusive about what I would learn on lower campus. He liked the fact I grew up in an oyster family. This last university year was so interesting, practical, and enlightening, thanks to Dr. Chew.

At the end of my undergraduate experience, Ken encouraged me to stay on and go to graduate school. But I was out of money and told him I had to get out into the real world and start applying what I learned. He nodded with compassion and understanding, but added, “if you change your mind, I can find a scholarship to help you purse a graduate degree.”

Over the next 53 years, I had the good fortune to work with Ken on various boards and committees. At a shellfish restoration conference on the East Coast in the mid90s, I reminded him about his offer to help me find scholarships for graduate school, and I turned down his generous offer. In typical fashion, he put his arm around me and said, “You've done all right, Kid.” Our friendship only deepened with time, and we talked about my life as a small shellfish farmer, fortunate to pass it on to our daughters someday. Ken brought his family to our farm on Totten Inlet for his grandkids to see a small family farm. Then they prepared a typical Chew seafood dinner on the front lawn.

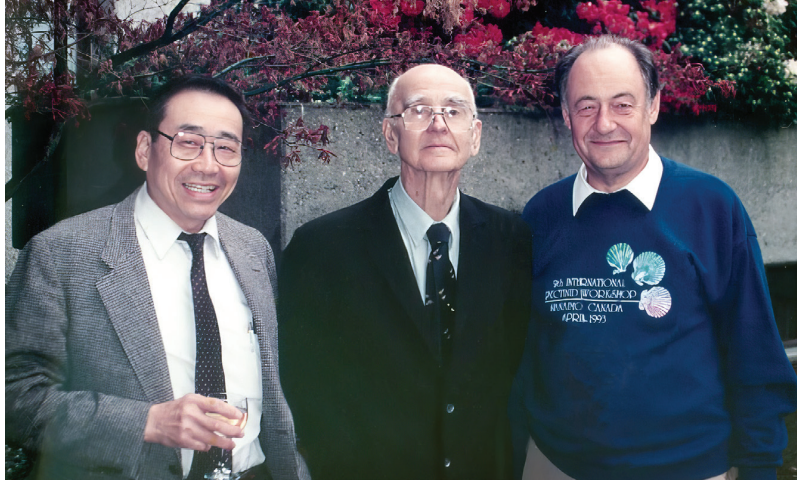
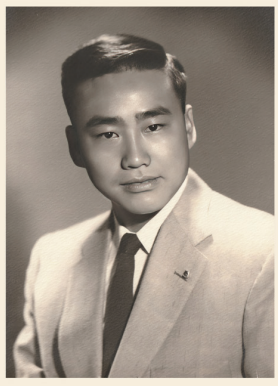
He was a great mentor to me, and we kept in touch up until the end. Our last conversation was in early September 2022. He called to tell me about the short time he had left. There was no fear in his voice, just concern for his beloved wife, May. As we said our goodbye, I told him I loved him and thanked him for our longtime friendship and contribution to shellfish research. He signed off, humbly saying he just learned along with his students, and seemed puzzled by all the accolades he received.

I admired his commitment to his faith and his family. Many of us in our industry and the research community owe him a debt of gratitude. He lives on in our hearts, and at special gatherings on the beach or in the kitchen where friends gather to slurp oysters. – Duane Fagergren, shellfish grower; former Special Projects Manager for the Puget Sound Action Team

I am more than honored to contribute to this tribute to Dr. Ken Chew as he is without question the reason I have the career that I love so much in the shellfish world today. Equal respect, and he knows this, to my major professor Dr. David Armstrong who certainly contributed equally, but when asked I will always stand up with other Ken Chew students and proudly claim that I am one! I was under his proverbial wing at the University of Washington from taking undergraduate classes that he taught including field trips and guzzling my first raw oyster on the tide flat, all the way through my Ph.D. when he served on my Committee and that says a lot because it took me awhile and he was always there to provide guidance and encouragement. This was often subtle – just a tap on the shoulder and quick question or comment, and not always recognized at the time – but ever so important and it truly shaped me and instilled in me curiosity and love for shellfish biology, culture, and the history and issues faced by the shellfish aquaculture industry here on the US west coast and frankly elsewhere in the world. He introduced me to the lead shellfish managers and helped me obtain my first summer job studying oyster larval set at the then Washington Department of Fisheries and, undoubtedly, many years later contributed to me obtaining a permanent position with the same agency at the “shellfish laboratory” on Willapa Bay – the place where I truly forged my career, where I later learned he had also spent time, and if you know me, you know it's a place that I will never truly leave! Perhaps just as or even more important, and again not initially recognized, he introduced me to the whole fantastic shellfish crowd – carted all of us to PCSGA-PCS NSA meetings in the UW van, supported travel to NSA meetings, hosted memorable Chinese dinners at these events, and later self-elected/appointed me to positions with these groups. It has and will continue to be a great ride for me, and I will miss his presence there for as long as I continue to attend. Every shellfish student/biologist/ecologist should be so lucky! – Brett Dumbauld, USDA Agricultural Research Service

I came to UW in 1978 intent on becoming a marine biologist at the School of Oceanography. Before starting classes I discovered the School of Fisheries next door where Dr. Chew quickly became a friend and mentor. His passion for bivalves, aquaculture, and his students was infectious. I graduated from the School of Fisheries in 1981 with a BS in shellfish biology and an interest pursuing work in shellfish seed production after learning how in the school's pilot shellfish hatchery in Manchester. Ken introduced me to Dick Steele at Rock Point Oyster Company. As he has no doubt did for countless other students, Ken called Dick and said, “I have a good one here for you Dick”. So began 40+ years of work I have thoroughly enjoyed. Ten of those years were for Rock Point and the rest of them growing Manila and geoduck clams on my own farm in Samish Bay and serving as Director of Public Affairs for Taylor Shellfish Farms. I am indebted to Ken for that initial introduction to Dick, his years of friend and mentorship, and a career which has been so rewarding and fun. – Bill Dewey, Taylor Shellfish Company

It was my great privilege to be a member of Ken Chew's Shellfish Gang, his group of over 20 graduate students at UW in the late 1970s. Ken's courses and field trips (and recipes) were legendary. His weekly laboratory meetings brilliantly illustrated the relevance of shellfish research to the burgeoning US and global aquaculture industries; but most of all, Ken Chew showed us the singular importance of treating people as equals, with dignity, kindness, and good humor. And we saw clearly how a highly successful academic could live a rich, full life with family at the epicenter. – Steve Tettlebach, Long Island University Post



I first met Dr. Chew at an NSA meeting in Seattle in 1971. I was sent to the meeting by Dr. Gordon Gunter, as I was working with him at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (GCRL) in Mississippi. Dr. Gunter asked me to deliver a talk about the southern oyster drill, *Thais haemastoma*, because he was unable to attend the meeting. This proved to be a turning point in my career. At the meeting I met so many other shellfish “greats”... e.g., Dr. Mel Carriker, Dr. Neil Bourne, Dr. Winston Menzel, and Mike Castagna, as well as Dr. Chew. A few years later, I was accepted as a Ph.D. student in the School of Fisheries at the University of Washington. Dr. Chew became my advisor and mentor and was always very kind, encouraging and empathetic to all the usual problems encountered by graduate students. I was privileged to be asked to serve as his teaching assistant for his shellfish laboratories and learned a lot from that experience. I enjoyed his molluscan and crustacean classes, in which he arranged many field trips. These were enlightening, fun, and, sometimes, a source of items for him to try out his culinary skills (e.g., moon snails we helped him collect on a clam bed, which he intended to bake and eat). He also delighted in having his camera ready to take pictures of students who got stuck in the mud at some oyster farms. Field trips were also an opportunity for Dr. Chew to inform students about the shellfish industry and aquaculture; however, we also learned that, in addition to shellfish, Dr. Chew was particularly fond of fried chicken feet, as well as fortune cookies. After spending many years on the east coast, I moved back to Washington State in 2022. I had learned that Dr. Chew and his wife, Maegan, were both ill with cancer, and went to visit them in their lovely home overlooking Puget Sound. When I asked Dr. Chew what I might bring them to eat, he said “pizza – with everything”. I was surprised at his choice but ordered an “everything” pizza from his favorite pizza place, delivered it, and shared it with them and their daughter, Marci. I will always be thankful for that visit, as it was the last time I saw both of them.

Dr. Chew had a great sense of humor, and would often answer my phone calls by teasing and asking “where ya been”? He included humor in his lectures, too, but also was serious in admonishing students to always be honest and ethical (e.g., don’t claim credit for someone else’s work or “pad” budgets in project proposals). He was always proud of his students and interested in what we were doing after graduation. He graciously wrote letters of recommendation when asked (and I’m sure there were many for all his former students). At NSA meetings he would often stand up in general gatherings and say, “Will all my former students and people I have helped please stand up”? Usually this resulted in about half of the audience rising from their seats.

Dr. Chew had many professional accolades, too many to list here, but I remember him most as a remarkable, generous, and compassionate person and mentor, who cared for his students and others and never failed to assist people in times of difficulties or provide advice and expertise. I am indebted to Dr. Chew for my career and will be forever grateful for his guidance and wisdom. – Kay A. McGraw, NOAA Habitat Restoration Center (retired)

**JONATHAN (JOTH) P. DAVIS**  
Baywater Shellfish Company, Washington

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