

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

STEPHEN HENRY SCHNEIDER

(1945-2010)

Our colleague and good friend Stephen Henry Schneider, the Melvin and Joan Lane Professor for Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies in the Department of Biology, and senior fellow at the Woods Institute for the Environment at Stanford, died on July 19, 2010, while traveling from a meeting in Gothenburg, Sweden, to London.

Schneider was a native New Yorker who spent his childhood on Long Island. He was educated at Columbia University, from which he received a B.S. degree in mechanical engineering in 1966 and a Ph.D. in plasma physics in 1971. A developing interest in atmospheric science led him to take a postdoctoral fellowship at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, in New York, from 1971 to 1972. From there, he went west to the National Center for Atmospheric Research, in Boulder, Colorado, where he worked as a scientist and leader for nearly 2 decades. In 1992, he continued his westward move to join the faculty of Stanford University, in California, where he remained until his death.

Schneider was not only a man of formidable intellectual depth and breadth, but also a committed and compassionate advisor, mentor, teacher and friend. While at Stanford, he continued his life's work of educating the world about the dangers of anthropogenic changes to our global climate and promoting alternative and sustainable ways of providing clean energy for the world's citizens. Schneider was the world's preeminent popularizer of climate science, and he made remarkable contributions to our scientific understanding of the nature and causes of climate change in a number of ways. First, he performed pioneering research on the effects of aerosol particles on climate. This work eventually led to investigation of how planetary cooling might be caused by the aerosol particles arising from large-scale fires generated by a nuclear war. Second, Schneider was also a pioneer in the development and application of the numerical models now used to study climate change. Third, he pointed out that climate change would be critically linked not just to changes in cloud amount but also to even very small changes in cloud top height. Steve was also instrumental in showing that slow heat transfer to the deep ocean can lead to lags of a decade or more in the response of the climate system. Finally, at Stanford, Schneider and his wife, Dr. Terry Root, Senior Fellow at the Woods Institute, led ground-breaking research on the impacts of human-caused climate change on the distribution and abundance of plant and animal species.

Schneider was never one to walk away from a challenge, be it hostile and provocative opponents to his viewpoints, or the mantle cell lymphoma that he took head-on and beat handsomely after being diagnosed with the disease in 2001. In his typical fashion, he immediately set out to learn everything about it, ably assisted by Terry. He collaborated with his doctors to design a course of treatment that led to remission. Schneider "diagnosed the diagnosers", and convinced his doctors of numerous ways in which his own treatment could be improved, a process that he chronicled in a remarkable book called *The Patient From Hell: How I Worked With My Doctors to Get the Best of Modern Medicine and How You Can Too*. He was also the author of more than a dozen books,

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including *Science as a Contact Sport: Inside the Battle to Save Earth's Climate*, and *Global Warming: Are We Entering the Greenhouse Century?*, as well as many scientific papers.

We fondly remember Schneider for his unbounded and infectious enthusiasm, his incredible commitment to everything he undertook, and making his time and his calendar seemingly available to the entire planet. We also remember him as one of the passionate leaders and architects of our interdisciplinary research and teaching programs in the environment at Stanford. Steve took leadership roles in the formation of our educational programs - Earth Systems, the Goldman Honors Program, and the Emmett Interdisciplinary Program in Environment and Resources for which he served for a time as the co-director. He helped form the Center for Environmental Science and Policy, which he co-directed for some years, and he was a founding member of the Woods Institute for the Environment. Among many other honors, Steve was a recipient in 1992 of a prestigious MacArthur Fellowship (a "genius grant") and was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 2002. He was a leading contributor to the assessments of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and he founded and edited the uniquely interdisciplinary and influential journal *Climatic Change* for its first 35 years.

Schneider's nonscientific enthusiasms were many, including bird prints, wine tasting, and good food, accompanied by a fine sense-of-humor and a love of music. Steve delighted in playing folk songs and rock tunes on his 12-string guitar. He said he started playing as an undergraduate at Columbia in the 1960s when, in his words, "guitar-playing was a substitute for a personality." He wasn't shy about singing, despite a less than velvety voice. Schneider and Root hosted many dinners that were followed by spirited guitar-strumming and singing. Steve and Stanford environmental economist Larry Goulder collaborated and performed publicly a few original songs as well, including their "Climate Change Blues," and a warped version of the Beatles' "When I'm 64."

At the memorial service for Schneider on Dec 12, 2010 at Stanford, Dr. John Holdren, Director of White House Office of Science and Technology summed up his career and contributions as follows. "Some have said that we will not see the like of Steve Schneider again. And I have spoken here about the remarkable combination of his intellect, ambition, commitment, communication skills, and unbelievable energy that would seem to make that so. But I would suggest we must hope that it's wrong. The world needs more Steve Schneiders. The most valuable thing we could do to honor his life and secure his legacy would be to redouble our efforts to inspire, to train, to help, and to honor those young people who have the aptitude and the energy to be, as he was, deep and broad interdisciplinary climate scientists, first class communicators, and committed contributors to the improvement of public policy. That is surely what he would want us to do."

Schneider is survived by his wife, Terry, who lives on the Stanford campus; a son, Adam, of San Diego; a daughter, Rebecca Cherba, of Eugene, Oregon; a sister, Elizabeth Lindenfeld, of La Jolla; a brother, Peter, of New York City; and a grandson, Nikolai.

Committee:

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