

## A few interesting things about Dr. Jon Torger Hougen

by Robert L. Sams, April, 2022

I earned my Masters in Physical Chemistry from the University of Washington in 1967. My advisor at the time was Dr. D. F. Eggers Jr., and he helped me get a job at the National Bureau of Standards (NBS) in the fall of 1967, where I worked in the Microwave and Infrared Spectroscopy Section, headed by Dr. David R. Lide Jr.

Jon, a member of that section, encouraged everyone to present papers at the *Symposium on Molecular Structure and Spectroscopy*, as it was known then. However, in 1970 the 25<sup>th</sup> Symposium was at the Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, and no one from NBS presented a paper (Dr. William Bruce Olson was on a paper that was presented by someone else). After we returned from Columbus, Jon informed everyone that this was not to happen ever again. Well, it never happened again and by the 70<sup>th</sup> Symposium in 2015, Jon had presented or was on at least 130 presented papers.

In the middle of 1981 I needed a place to stay for a few months. Jon was buying a condominium, so I asked him if I could stay with him and pay a monthly fee. He said yes, so I moved in and I thought I might as well work the same schedule that Jon did. During the time that I stayed there, we would go to work at NBS at about 9:00 a.m., come home and have dinner at about 6:00 p.m. and then go back to NBS and work until about 4:00 a.m. I would try and get some sleep. Jon would study Japanese for about two hours and then sleep for about two hours and have breakfast and do the day over again every day of the week, and he did it all of his life. Jon did like to learn new languages by immersion. For instance, to learn to speak, read, and write Japanese, he would go to the Institute for Molecular Science in Okazaki, Japan, and would choose his rental room based on the criteria that all of the people in the house spoke no English.

I remember my time with Jon fondly, and I was saddened to hear of his passing. I trust that his memory will live on in the Jon T. Hougen Memorial Award Fund, and I'm happy to contribute to this fund.