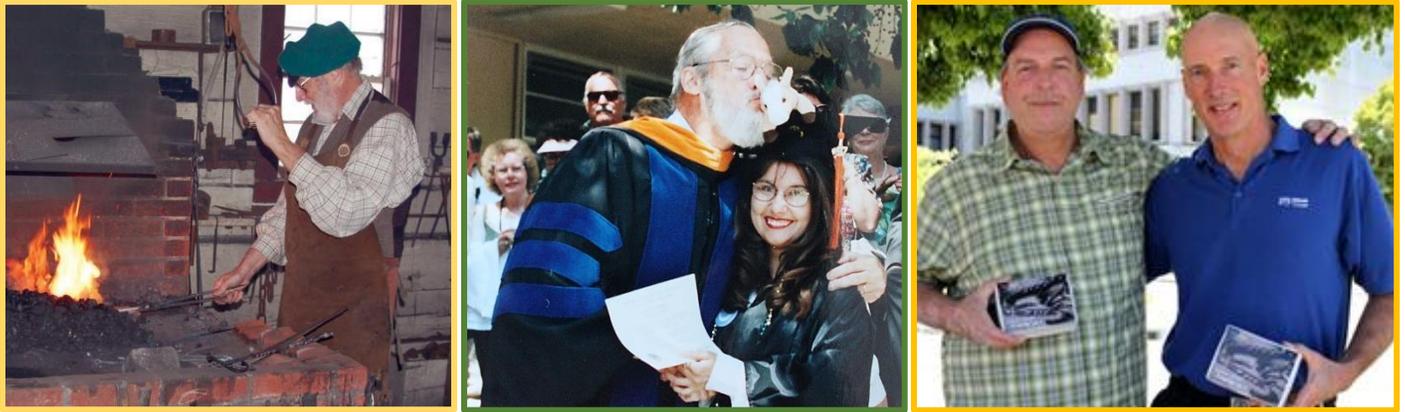


Dr. Bill Forgeng: Words of Remembrance from John Simpson (Class of 1981)



Dr. Forgeng taught his first year at Cal Poly when those of us in the Metallurgical Engineering class of 1981 were seniors. Being new to the area and with his family still back east, he was eager to participate in nearly anything, including Alpha Sigma Mu club events, beach BBQs, whale watching trips, or just bag lunching it outside the IT Plastics lab. Thus we quickly got to know him and to truly enjoy his company outside the classroom.

We all had his Met Thermo lecture at the unfortunate hour of 8:00, and this was decades before Starbucks raised the bar on caffeine intake. To keep us alert he would tell a joke at the start of each lecture, and then slip in a "groaner" pun wherever one would fit. That was the class whose content I remember least (due to lack of subsequent use), but of which I hold the fondest memories. However, I do remember that his and his father's names were associated with the most important phase diagrams used for stainless steel alloys and this made a huge impression on me.

When I think of people who truly lead by example and who have been outstanding role models in my life, my short list always includes Dr. Forgeng. In both his lectures and labs he loved to tie in his experiences at US Steel, which always made whatever we were learning seem relevant and important.

When Dr. Forgeng passed away, I made the trip to Vancouver, WA to see his family and pay my respects. I arrived there early in the day and had several hours to kill beforehand, so I decided to explore the historical site of Ft Vancouver. I was immediately drawn to the blacksmith's shop within the restored compound, and was disappointed that it was closed that day. That did not stop me from peeking through every window and thinking how much Dr. Forgeng would have enjoyed the furnace, anvils, and antique tools.

At his memorial later, I met someone who, by coincidence, was a volunteer blacksmith at Fort Vancouver. He explained that Dr. Forgeng, in his retirement, had been a volunteer there for years and had taught many visitors the art and science of metalworking. The man loved what he knew and he loved to share it.

I will never forget Dr. Forgeng.

John is pictured above on the right, with fellow alumni, Scott Miner.