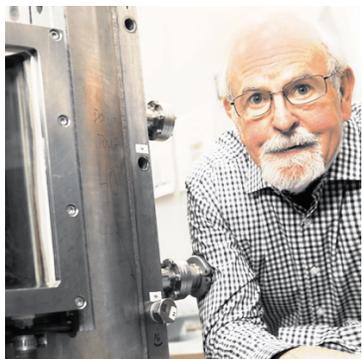


# Kelvin Gideon Lynn

1948 – 2020



Born in Rapid City, SD on February 2, 1948, Kelvin was the youngest of the four children of Mildred E. Gideon and Kelso D. Lynn. Curiosity and mischievousness reigned supreme in the Lynn household and was fueled by his parents' acrimonious divorce in 1960. Kelvin was not a model child: throwing a desk out of a high school window, creating mischief on a golf course, mowing down stop signs and flaunting every rule in the book.

College brought him to Utah following his high school girlfriend. At the University of Utah, he found his passion in using an antimatter-based tool called positron annihilation. His advisor gave him considerable latitude. Kelvin seized the opportunity gaining his Ph.D. in Materials Science and a second bachelor's degree in math, three years after his initial degree. Kelvin's passions also found an outlet in a new girlfriend who would become his wife, lifelong suitcase-packer, magnet-winder, resistor-filer and the love of his life.

Kelvin's first job following college took him to Brookhaven National Lab (BNL) on Long Island, where he continued to use positron annihilation to explore materials. There he developed several positron beam technologies which have been adopted worldwide. Kelvin's phenomenal memory served him well, as he was able to integrate techniques and data from his previous experiments into new endeavors. In 1981 he was awarded tenure. Kelvin's work at BNL earned him mention in *Time* magazine for his work disproving cold fusion and a spot on television's *20/20*, as well as the ire of BNL management. Concurrently, he and his team built the first nuclear reactor-based positron beam, sharing the ownership title of most intense positron beam and in a matter of months converting an electron beam to a positron beam, only to prove that a sought-after particle did not exist.

In 1996 Kelvin and his family moved to Pullman, WA, where he directed the Center for Materials Research at Washington State University (WSU). The transition from a national lab to a university took considerable work, but Kelvin was never short on dedication. He continued his efforts in positron annihilation building a new accelerator-based beam. His curiosity then carried him in a totally new direction, that of crystal growth. Kelvin, with the help of his team, was able to grow crystals that captured solar energy at levels superseding the capabilities of current materials. In addition, crystals for other applications, even rubies, were grown. He nurtured and mentored several generations of young scientists, too numerous to count, who have spread across the globe contributing to over 300 refereed publications. In recognition of these accomplishments, Kelvin was named both a Regents' Professor and Eminent Professor at WSU. His legacy in research will carry-on for decades to come through his many students.

Kelvin freely shared his ideas and insights with anybody willing to listen: friend, student, co-worker, or competitor. His successes were fueled by a never-ending curiosity, inability to be deterred by being proven wrong, the willingness to reapply old papers and zero hesitation to learn from failures, while looking through other's trash, literally, for discarded equipment. When given thanks, he would just point out that science would progress faster, thereby revealing the secrets of nature. These many accomplishments were also reflected in the deep personal relationships he formed with his colleagues and students.

Kelvin could connect with almost anyone and nurtured friendships throughout his life. Wally Gator remained close with his high school friends, attending every reunion and riding motorcycles each year in the Black Hills. Professionally, his colleagues often became close friends providing a forum for robust debates, relentless teasing and more recently comradery on the golf course. A positron colleague once wrote that Kelvin "could charm one hump off a two-hump camel". The friendships that defined Kelvin the most were those from his fraternity days. These friends were present throughout his life and quickly became his second family. This makes it all the more fitting that they were with him when he passed away skiing powder in the Utah mountains.

Kelvin peppered us all with question after question, a trait deemed 'Kelvination' by his father-in-law. There was no query that was too sensitive or off-limits. A canned response only provoked more intense probing and Kelvin took great pride in being the one "in the know". His lines of questioning often carried into his love of music, particularly classic rock. *Name that Tune* was one of his favorite lines of inquiry.

He is survived by his girlfriend and subsequent wife of 52 years, Cindy Rice, as well as his two children, Molly (Jason Mullin, Eli, Hannah) and Adam, of which he was immensely proud. From him they learned to follow their passions and prioritize their friendships. Kelvin's constant questions, work ethic and ability to bring people together, gave them a lasting template for moving through life. He was surprised and delighted by his role as a grandfather and derived great joy in Eli and Hannah's progress and antics. Kelvin is survived by his three siblings: Judy Kieffer, Kelso (Jean), Nick; sisters-in-law Christine Weingold (Peter) and Traci Locke (Robert Grossman) as well as 11 nieces and nephews. Those who called him 'Uncle' frequently included 'favorite' first. His unremitting love of friends will live on through his second family, Dutch Kolff (Denise Dimitroff), John Bacon (Jane Smith) and Prescott Muir (Betty Ortega-Muir). His family, friends and colleagues will most certainly miss The Absolute Zero.

A celebration of Kelvin's life will be held Saturday, January 12<sup>th</sup> from 5 to 7pm at Starks Funeral Parlor, 3651 S. 900 E., Salt Lake City, Utah. Please use complimentary valet parking at the north entrance of the building.

In lieu of flowers, please make a contribution to Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners at [GSENM.org](http://GSENM.org)

Online condolences may be offered (and possibly an online slideshow) at [www.starksfuneral.com](http://www.starksfuneral.com). Please send any photos of Kelvin to [pictureskelvin@gmail.com](mailto:pictureskelvin@gmail.com).