

Decades of Dedication

By Joi Coles/Photo Courtesy of Bill Kronert



Olympian Jesse Owens once said: “We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline, and effort.” Not much else exemplifies dedication more than spending 37 years working in a lab that began serendipitously.

In 1983, William “Bill” Kronert was a curious SDSU biology student in search of lab experience to help bolster his chances of finding work after graduation. At the same time, a new faculty member named Dr. Sandy Bernstein had just opened his molecular biology lab and needed student support. Bill was given the choice between Dr. Bernstein’s lab and another biology lab and ultimately chose the former.

Over the course of his time in Dr. Bernstein’s lab, Bill participated in cutting-edge molecular research mainly focusing on fruit flies – which he says is always a fun topic to discuss with others. His most memorable lab experience was viewing a fruit fly’s beating heart under a microscope.

After some time and a promotion to lab manager, Mr. Kronert trained incoming graduate students, maintained lab facilities, checked on equipment, and most importantly, ensured that all lab data was accurate and complete. He also sought to improve working conditions in the lab and always pushed students to remain curious.

Bill was a co-author on many papers and has been published twenty-seven times.

He drew much of his inspiration from his own experiences as a student at SDSU. College did not come easily to Bill and he was told to quit a handful of times. This discouragement only strengthened his resolve and motivated him to lead with two things: devotion and passion.

Bill’s devotion and passion was rewarded when he received the Freya Sladek Service Award which he keeps on his desk in his home office.

His nearly four decades of dedication to his work afforded him many more experiences than he anticipated when he arbitrarily joined Dr. Bernstein’s lab. Moreover, his ability to work hard and the positive impact he had on others has left a legacy that we are fortunate to witness.

Bill retired in early 2020. He and his wife, Eugenia, also a research foundation employee, are now enjoying their happy new life in Oregon where they regularly go hiking and river rafting.

“Bill joined our lab group as an undergraduate completing his degree in 1983. When I saw his work ethic and scientific ability, I suggested he apply for our research technician position upon graduation. He got the job and stayed on for 37 years! During that period, he moved up to the lab manager position and thus served the dual role of obtaining research results and keeping the lab organized. Bill’s contributions to our research projects have been enormous, with his technical expertise ranging from molecular cloning to fly genetics to electron microscopy. He helped write ten research papers on which he served as first author and co-authored an additional 18. He also contributed strongly to designing experiments to be included in successful grant proposals, even helping to craft some of the specific aims. Bill helped others in the lab, including a number of graduate students who depended upon him for training and molecular cloning expertise. Overall, it is difficult to know how we will carry on following Bill’s retirement, given his years of service and productivity, but we shall try. We also look forward to incorporating his data into a number of future papers that are still in process. So Bill’s publication numbers will continue to climb. We thank Bill Kronert for his dedication and productivity and wish him a happy retirement along with his wonderful wife Eugenia.”

- Dr. Sandy Bernstein, distinguished professor of biology and Bill Kronert’s long-time friend and former supervisor