

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Estate gift from chemistry professor is largest ever given by WSU faculty, staff**

An estate gift to the Wichita State University Foundation from the late Erach Talaty is believed to be the largest ever given to the university by a current or former faculty or staff member, says James J. Rhatigan, consultant to the WSU Foundation.

Talaty was a highly regarded chemistry professor at WSU from 1969 until his death last June at the age of 86. His bequest to Wichita State will result in a gift approaching \$2.2 million, Rhatigan said.

As a friend of Talaty's, Rhatigan is executor of his estate.

"Wichita State was his life," Rhatigan said. "He was an exceptional teacher, researcher, a person who was connected internationally."

Talaty specified that the funds be used in three ways: to establish a distinguished professorship in chemistry, to create an endowed scholarship for undergraduate students majoring in chemistry and to enhance the Dr. Erach Talaty Endowed Fellowship in Chemistry, a scholarship for graduate students established in his honor in 1999.

The gifts are an enormous boon to the chemistry department. Helping undergraduate students pay for their education was a matter of special importance to Talaty, Department Chair David Eichhorn said.

"Dr. Talaty's interest in undergraduate students is well documented, as is the difficulty today's undergraduate students have in finding the resources to fund an increasingly expensive college education," Eichhorn said. "This new scholarship will certainly be a great help to the students."

Just as significant is the gift to create a distinguished professorship.

"Dr. Talaty spent time as a post-doctoral scholar with a Nobel laureate in chemistry and he knew the importance of distinguished faculty to advance a department's research effort," Eichhorn said.

Talaty was born in Persia and received his degree in chemistry from Nagpur University

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in India before moving to the United States and earning a second Ph.D. in chemistry from Ohio State University. He was a post-doctoral fellow with Nobel Prize-winning chemist Robert Woodward at Harvard. He came to WSU in 1969.

At the time, the chemistry department was transitioning from one focused predominantly on teaching into a strong research department. Talaty was a major contributor to that process, distinguishing himself as a researcher.

His dedication to his students was recognized by a number of awards, including WSU's Leadership in the Advancement of Teaching Award, and culminating with his being named by the Carnegie Foundation as the 1999 Kansas Professor of the Year.

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**Media note:** A photo of Erach Talaty can be found at [www.wichita.edu/foundationphotos](http://www.wichita.edu/foundationphotos).

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