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Tim Bowden, PhD, and his wife, Diane Bowden

## UA Cancer Center's Dr. Tim Bowden Fondly Remembered As Gifted Scientist, Teacher and Mentor

*University of Arizona physicians and researchers remember Dr. Bowden as a "friend, mentor, passionate scientist and remarkable human being."*

**George Timothy "Tim" Bowden, PhD**, a professor emeritus at the University of Arizona Cancer Center and a founding member of the Cancer Biology Graduate Interdisciplinary Program, died May 15 after a lengthy battle with Parkinson's disease.

Diane Bowden, his wife of more than 50 years, was at his side.

"The Department of Cellular and Molecular Medicine is deeply grieved by the loss of Dr. Bowden," said **Carol Gregorio, PhD**, head of the UA Department of Cellular and Molecular Medicine. "I am confident that the strong spirit of research he championed will live on."

Dr. Bowden received his doctorate in experimental oncology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

"He was an outstanding scientist with a national reputation. He and his wife were extremely supportive of student education," added **Andrew Kraft, MD**, UA Cancer Center director.

### A dedicated researcher

Skin cancer was the focus of Dr. Bowden's research and much of his work was funded by the National Cancer Institute's Skin Cancer Program Project Grant, which brought tens of millions of dollars to the UA Cancer Center. Dr. Bowden's lab investigated cancer preventive agents, including drugs that could be applied to sun-damaged skin to reduce skin cancer risk.

"Dr. Bowden was world famous for his work on ultraviolet light-induced skin cancer and was very highly regarded as a scientist," said **David Alberts, MD**, director emeritus of the UA Cancer Center. "That was his passion — he created a whole field of research and training."

Dr. Bowden helped identify molecules in the body that respond to UV light exposure; these molecules can change as skin cells become cancerous. He believed that studying how these molecules changed

during a cell's journey to cancer could reveal places in the process that could be "targeted" by novel pharmaceutical agents or certain natural products, helping people at high risk of skin cancer reduce their risk.

"The Skin Cancer Institute at the UA Cancer Center will continue to carry on his legacy," said **Clara Curiel, MD**, director of the Cutaneous Oncology Program.

### **A beloved mentor**

Many UA Cancer Center members started their careers with Dr. Bowden at their sides, guiding them through their educations as a gifted mentor and teacher.

"Tim invited me into his lab as an undergraduate summer student in 1998, and I continued working in his lab through graduate school. He has been more than a mentor ever since," recalled **Betsey Wagener, PhD**, of the Skin Cancer Institute. "Tim was generous and gracious to his lab team, and he never failed to give credit to those who worked with him."

### **A generous philanthropist**

In 2007, Dr. Bowden was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, a degenerative condition that causes a decline in balance and motor skills. Instead of being sidelined by his diagnosis, Dr. Bowden learned about research showing that certain intense exercises can ease many Parkinson's symptoms. He and Diane helped found PWR! Gym, an exercise and wellness center for Parkinson's patients.

In life, Dr. Bowden was a prolific mentor, and even after retirement he supported UA Cancer Center students through the Tim and Diane Bowden Cancer Biology Research Fund.

"We want to see the Cancer Biology program flourish," [said](#) Dr. Bowden at the time. "We see these students and mentees as our extended family."

The Bowdens' legacy will propel cancer research into the future.

"Dr. Bowden's memory will live on through those he knew, but also through our Cancer Biology Graduate Interdisciplinary Program — a program he and his wife made sustainable through their continuing support so we can train the next generation of cancer research scholars," added **Anne Cress, PhD**, professor of cellular and molecular medicine and radiation oncology.

### **A cherished friend**

Dr. Bowden's friends all share fond memories of his love for science and the outdoors, and the warmth he showed to those around him.

"Tim demonstrated how to enjoy life to its fullest," recalled Dr. Wagener. "He balanced his hard work in the lab with his love of outdoor activities."

I will always remember Tim as a friend, mentor, passionate scientist and remarkable human being.”

“Dr. Bowden lived his life as an example of hard work, discipline and generosity,” added **Sally Dickinson, PhD**, assistant professor in the UA Department of Pharmacology and member of the Skin Cancer Institute.

Tim and Diane were junior high school sweethearts in Cincinnati and married in 1966. In 1978, Dr. Bowden’s appointment to the Department of Radiology brought the couple to Tucson, where they made their home and cultivated lifelong friendships.

“While Dr. Bowden was a terrific scientist, most of us will agree that it was his kind and considerate approach to almost everything he did that was so remarkable,” said Dr. Curiel.

“We had a tremendous friendship. He was one of the most wonderful gentlemen,” recalled Dr. Alberts. “He made the word ‘gentleman’ mean something.”

***PLEASE NOTE: Diane Bowden has requested that, in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the [Tim and Diane Bowden Cancer Research Fund](#).***

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