Professor James A. Olson
On The Occasion of Receiving An Honorary Doctoral Degree From Mahidol University
Thursday, 14 October 1999
IN CONFIRMATION OF LETTER SENT BY TELEFACSIMILE

Professor James Allen Olson
Biochemistry & Biophysics
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Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011-3260
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21 September 1999

Dear Professor Olson,

I am delighted to learn that you accepted our invitation to receive a Degree of Doctor of Science (Biochemistry), Honoris Causa, and that you are able to attend the Annual Graduation Ceremony. May I take this opportunity to inform you about the schedule of the events for the ceremonies.

Her Royal Highness Princess Mahachakri Sirindhorn will confer the degree to you during Mahidol University's Annual Graduation Ceremony held on 14 October 1999 at 2.30 p.m. in the New Pavilion of Amporn Garden. The rehearsal for the acceptance of the honorary degree will be held on 13 October 1999 at 8.00 a.m. at the New Pavilion as well. A ceremony for the presentation of the academic gowns to all of the Honoris Causa Degree recipients will be held prior to the Graduation Ceremony on 14 October 1999 at 10.30 a.m. in Room 906 which is on the 9th floor at the Office of the President, Mahidol University. I have enclosed a programme for the presentation of the gowns ceremony for your convenience.

Thank you for providing us with all of the required information. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Athasit Vejjajiva, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.P.
President
Mahidol University Announcement
Subject: Honorary Degree Recipients
For the academic year of 1998

The Mahidol University Council, in the 302nd meeting held on 17 March 1999, agreed to confer honorary doctoral degrees upon eight respected scholars for the academic year of 1998 as follows:

1. Lieutenant General Roumsak Chaikomin
   Doctor of Education, Honoris Causa
2. Professor Dr. Vicharn Panich
   Doctor of Science (Molecular Genetics and Genetic Engineering), Honoris Causa
3. Professor Emeritus Kanoknat Choopanya
   Doctor of Science (Medical Technology), Honoris Causa
4. Professor Thomas Michael Dexter
   Doctor of Science (Tropical Medicine), Honoris Causa
5. Professor Dr. James A. Olson
   Doctor of Science (Biochemistry), Honoris Causa
6. Professor Dr. Yasuji Oshima
   Doctor of Science (Biotechnology), Honoris Causa
7. Mr. John R. Lupien
   Doctor of Science (Nutrition), Honoris Causa
8. Capt. Kwanruan Suguanchua, RTN.
   Master of Nursing, Honoris Causa

Mahidol University issues this announcement in accordance with the Article 12 of the University Regulations 1990 concerning the conferment of Honorary Degrees.

Given on the date of 26 July 1999

(signed by) Athasit Vejjajiva, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.P.
President

Translated by the International Relations Division, Mahidol University
ประกาศมหาวิทยาลัยศิลปศาสตร์
เรื่อง รายงานผู้ได้รับปริญญาภิกดีกิตติคุณ
ประจำปีการศึกษา ๒๕๔๑

ค่ายสหทม. ถึงที่ประชุมครั้งที่ ๒๒ ที่วันที่ ๖ เมษายน ๒๕๔๑ ได้มีมติอนุมัติให้ปริญญาภิกดีกิตติคุณ แก่ผู้ทรงคุณวุฒิเหล่านั้น ได้รับปริญญาภิกดีกิตติคุณ ตาม wol. ต่อไปนี้

๑. ศาสตราจารย์ ดร.ธเนศ ประสาท
ปริญญาสาขาวิชาศิลปศาสตร์

๒. ศาสตราจารย์ ดร.ธเนศ ประสาท
ปริญญาวิชาการศึกษาด้านนิเทศนศิลปศาสตร์

๓. ศาสตราจารย์ ดร.ธเนศ ประสาท
ปริญญาวิชาการศึกษาด้านสื่อสารมวลชน

๔. ศาสตราจารย์ ดร.ธเนศ ประสาท
ปริญญาวิชาการศึกษาด้านศิลปศาสตร์

๕. ศาสตราจารย์ ดร.ธเนศ ประสาท
ปริญญาวิชาการศึกษาด้านศิลปศาสตร์

๖. ศาสตราจารย์ ดร.ธเนศ ประสาท
ปริญญาวิชาการศึกษาด้านศิลปศาสตร์

๗. ศาสตราจารย์ ดร.ธเนศ ประสาท
ปริญญาวิชาการศึกษาด้านศิลปศาสตร์

๘. ศาสตราจารย์ ดร.ธเนศ ประสาท
ปริญญาวิชาการศึกษาด้านศิลปศาสตร์

ฉบับนี้ เพื่อให้ผู้มีส่วนได้เสียในกิจการมหาวิทยาลัยทราบ ว่าสิทธิการให้ปริญญาภิกดีกิตติคุณ มีผลบังคับใช้ตั้งแต่วันที่ ๒๕ ตุลาคม พ.ศ. ๒๕๔๑ นับถึงที่ประชุมครั้งต่อไปนี้

ประกาศ ณ วันที่ ๒๖ ตุลาคม พ.ศ. ๒๕๔๑

(ลงนาม) ตราสิทธิ์ เวชชาชีวะ
组织มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปศาสตร์

นันท์(สาหร่าย)
Programme for the ceremonial Presentation of Academic Gowns to Honorary Doctorate Recipients
Thursday 14 October, 1999
Room 906, 9th Floor, the Office of the President
Mahidol University

10.00 a.m.  Participants meet at the meeting room

10.30 a.m.  - Opening Ceremonial Rites by Athasit Vejjajiva, President
            - Formal Announcement of Honoured Guests by the Vice-President
            - Distribution of Academic Gowns by the Honoured Guests
            - Donning of the Gowns by the Honoured Guests
            - Congratulations and Toast to the Honoured Guests by the President
            - Photo opportunity with the Audience
            - Lunch

Dress: Suit with Academic Gown
James Allen Olson

James A. Olson (Dr. Olson to most of us) is a world-renowned researcher in nutrition, function, metabolism, and pharmacological activity of vitamin A, retinoids, and carotenoids. He is a distinguished professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics at Iowa State University.

Dr. Olson spent the years 1966 – 1974 as a staff member of the Rockefeller Foundation, which was supporting the Faculty of Sciences, University of Medical Sciences (now Faculty of Science, Mahidol University), in pre-clinical and graduate science education. During the major part of the period, he was a constant driving force in the Department of Biochemistry for effective teaching, organization and research. In all there were 22 lucky people in his research group: graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and medical students. It is also during his tenure as acting chairman and visiting professor that our Department started to build up its potential. Together with the new Thai faculty members, the prevailing academic environment in early seventies made it possible for the Department research works to attain international standards and to be at the forefront of biological sciences in Thailand and probably in South-East Asia also. The citation impact of papers published from the Department between 1985 – 1995 was among the highest in Thailand and ranked respectably in the world. Also because of his international standing invited seminar speakers then were among the world’s top biochemists and molecular biologists; quite a few Nobel Prize winners came to Mahidol University.

After Thailand, Dr. Olson was with the Rockefeller Foundation in Brazil until 1975. He then took up professorship and chairmanship of the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics at the Iowa State University, USA, where he has had a very distinguished career until now.

Professor Olson has been on the editorial boards of international journals such as Journal of Lipid Research, Nutrition Reports International and Journal of Nutrition. Today, at age 75, he is still on the editorial boards of FASEB Journal, European Journal of...
Clinical Nutrition, Biofactors and Journal of Food Science and Nutrition.

Dr. Olson has chaired and served on numerous American and international committees. Among them, he is a member of the organizing committee of the New York Academy of Sciences Conference on Carotenoids; deputy chairman of the Gordon Research Committee on Carotenoids; member of the technical advisory group, Vitamin A Programs, International Scientific and Technical Institute; and member of NASA’s Working Group on Vitamin Requirements for Space Travel.

Dr. Olson was also the organizer and editor of the International Directory of Scientists and Administrators involved in the alleviation of vitamin A deficiency and nutritional blindness in humans, and the role of retinoids and carotenoids in embryological development.

Dr. Olson has served as president of the American Institute of Nutrition (1986 – 1987), chairman of the U.S. National Committee of the International Union of Nutritional Sciences (1983 – 1986), chairman of the U.S. panel of the U.S.-Japan joint malnutrition panel (1989 – 1992), and a Wellcome lecturer in nutrition (1991). He has received an honorary degree from the University of Ghent, Belgium (1988), and the Borden Award of the American Institute of Nutrition (1989) and is a Fellow of the American Institute of Nutrition (1991). In 1998 he was the plenary lecturer at the Gordon conference on carotenoids held in California, USA.

For his contribution to the development of Mahidol University and his lifetime achievements in improving global nutrition, Mahidol University bestows the honorary doctorate of science to Professor James Allen Olson for auspicious year of 1999 which coincides with His Majesty the King’s 72nd birthday anniversary.
ABSTRACT
Biochemistry and pharmacology of retinoid conjugates

Vitamin A, the most common, naturally occurring form of the retinoids, is essential for vision, growth, cell differentiation, the immune response, and reproduction. In the body, it is oxidized to retinoic acid, and both retinol and retinoic acid are converted in part to water-soluble beta-glucuronides.

These glucuronides show interesting properties; namely, they are biologically active, sometimes more active than their parent compounds, and they are relatively nontoxic and nonteratogenic. Thus, they may be benign, reserve forms of vitamin A that are hydrolyzed to the parent compounds when needed.

Retinoyl beta-glucuronide also shows therapeutic properties against acne without showing the skin irritation of retinoic acid, and retinyl glucuronide, but not retinol, inhibits hormone-dependent mammary gland proliferation.

The retinoid conjugates may act by forming covalent linkages with proteins or by serving as precursors to their parent substances. They are not bound tightly by specific retinoid-binding proteins. The hydrolytic rate of retinoyl beta-glucuronide is enhanced in vitamin A deficiency.

The retinoid conjugates, therefore, clearly are not solely detoxification products, but seem to play roles in vitamin A physiology. They also can be fruitfully employed as therapeutic agents.

James Allen Olson, Ph.D.
Distinguished Professor, Biochemistry, Biophysics and Molecular Biology
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011


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Who !!!

Where !!!

When !!!
TRIBUTE TO JAMES ALLEN OLSON

Gordon B. Bailey

James Allen Olson, Ph.D., was the first Chairman of the Department of Biochemistry of the Faculty of Science, Mahidol University. He planted the seeds and nurtured the seedlings that have flourished to produce a biomedical sciences department of preeminence in the University and, indeed, in the country. Today, the fruits of Dr. Olson’s nurturing can be found at every level of the infrastructure for higher education and research in biomedical sciences in Thailand, both in the academy and in government. Among those who came from abroad to participate in the development of biomedical graduate education and research in the Faculty of Science, I can think of no one who deserves more the present recognition and honor being accorded to James Allen Olson.

Jim Olson grew up in Minnesota, a state heavily populated with people who, like himself, are of Scandinavian descent and characterized by such qualities as honesty, sincerity, a strong work ethic and reserve. All of these qualities are found in Jim Olson. Jim was a serious student. He graduated with the highest honors, summa cum laude, from Gustavus Adolphus College in Minnesota, majoring in physics and chemistry. But he also studied Japanese. Umm. After graduation, Jim applied his new knowledge as a young US Navy Lieutenant in post-war Japan, working as a translator and abstractor of scientific writings. Aha, a taste of Asia. His military obligation fulfilled, Jim returned to the USA to
take his Ph.D. in biochemistry at prestigious Harvard University under Dr. Christian B. Anfinsen, winner of the 1972 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Jim undertook postdoctoral training in Rome with Dr. Ernst Chain, another Noble laureate, and at Harvard with Dr. Konrad Bloch, yet another Noble laureate. While in Italy, Jim met and married Dr. Giovanna Del Nero, a young Italian scientist. Thus trained, and with a charming new wife, Jim accepted an appointment to the Department of Biochemistry in the School of Medicine at the University of Florida. Over 10 productive years at Florida, he rose to the rank of senior Professor, taught with great skill and dedication (my first exposure to this remarkable man), trained numerous graduate students and postdoctoral fellows and established an international reputation in Vitamin A, retinoid and carotenoid research.

While James Allen Olson is, basically, a serious and dedicated scholar, he is clearly also a man with a taste for adventure and an international focus. The Florida years were not spent solely in the classroom and the laboratory. Jim found time to become a highly skilled SCUBA diver in the early days of this challenging new avocation. With a handful of daring and like-minded underwater adventurers, he pioneered diving and exploration of the deep underground caves and rivers that honeycomb northern Florida. I remember, as if it were yesterday, the massive bone from a mastodon, an extinct mammal related to the mammoth and the elephant, that Dr. Olson had discovered deep in some underwater cavern. This dark bone adorned the windowsill behind his office desk and stared at me during meetings to discuss my progress as a graduate student. I think it resided, as well, in his office in the Department at Mahidol, where it may have stared at some of you
dear readers, squirming under circumstances similar to mine.

Dr. Olson's association with the Department of Biochemistry began in mid-1966 (2509) shortly after he had been invited by The Rockefeller Foundation to join with them to assist in the development of a new Faculty of Science at Mahidol and in the creation in Thailand of graduate education programs in biomedical sciences at the doctoral level. As we might expect by now, Jim Olson jumped at the opportunity for this challenging new adventure abroad. And in August that year, he came to Thailand with Giovanna and their three young children.

The underlying force for the overall development of the present Faculty of Science was its first Dean, Professor Stang Mongkol suk, a man of remarkable vision and accomplishment. Through Dean Stang's efforts, assistance was provided by The Rockefeller Foundation, which had assisted more than 40 years earlier in the development the Faculty of Medicine (Siriraj Phyaban), Mahidol University. Dr. James Dinning, an internationally recognized nutritional biochemist and close colleague of Dean Stang, served as director of the Rockefeller Foundation programs in Thailand.

The biomedical science departments of the new Faculty were initially chaired by visiting professors recruited by The Rockefeller Foundation from universities in the United States. Each of these visiting chairs was a recognized leader in his field. But James Allen Olson was clearly the leader among these leaders.

Even before Dr. Olson left his position at the University of Florida to come to Bangkok, he was busy planning for the needs of his new department. With the dedicated and able assistance of Dr. Jay Lon Pope, a senior post doctoral fellow who was to accompany
Dr. Olson to Bangkok, the new chairman developed long lists of the equipment and supplies that would be purchased to support the teaching and research laboratories; he outlined plans for the first graduate courses; he began his study of the Thai language and, to my great good fortune, he recruited me to join him.

While construction of the present Faculty of Science on Rama VI Road was being completed, the budding Department of Biochemistry was housed on the third floor of a rather worn back building of the present Faculty of Pharmacy on Sri Ayuthaya Road. Here, Dr. Olson set up his office and a rudimentary laboratory, exercised great wisdom in hiring Khun Patcharee Karnasutra as departmental secretary, began teaching the first group of M.Sc. degree candidates, continued planning for the move to the new Faculty, advised and instructed his growing junior staff and did his best (usually unsuccessfully) to outwit Dean Stang and Dr. Kamchon, ultimate controllers of the departmental budget. Valuable assistance was provided by Dr. Serene Wimokesant (Piboonniyom), who had joined the Department from Kasetsart University. I will not take space to describe details of the wonder, excitement, mystery and, sometimes, frustration of those early days. Suffice to say that my mind is flooded at this moment with warm recollections of that experience and of the guidance provided by my new boss, Jim Olson.

As soon as the Department was housed on the third floor of the ‘preclinic’ building of the new Faculty, Dr. Olson was busy defining the course plans for both 3rd year medical students and the growing number of graduate students. With the help of an increasing number of junior faculty and staff, the teaching and research laboratories were set up, including all the gleaming new equipment that
had been ordered and was now installed with Dr. Pope’s help. Dr. Olson identified and recruited to join his department the best of the young Thai scholars who were now returning from abroad with doctoral degrees from some of the most prestigious universities in the world. And he convinced The Rockefeller Foundation that additional visiting junior faculty were needed, at least for a few years. The best science graduates at the baccalaureate level from universities in Thailand and abroad were recruited aggressively into the Biochemistry Department graduate program. A regular program of departmental research seminars was initiated, many delivered by renowned international scientists invited by Dr. Olson or whom he managed to capture when they visited Thailand. The current international tone of the graduate programs at Mahidol was set in the Department of Biochemistry, first by postdoctoral fellows recruited by Dr. Olson from the Philippines, India and Australia, and soon thereafter, by graduate students from countries about the Asia Pacific region and elsewhere. Dr. Olson and Dr. Serene were the guiding force that lead to publication of the first biochemistry text written in the Thai language. And, of course, there were (and still are) the famous and sumptuous Biochemistry Department luncheons, brainchild of Dr. Olson and so important in maintaining departmental morale, not to mention in recruiting promising graduate students and rewarding guest seminar speakers. Biochemistry was the first department to burst its seams in the ‘preclinic’ wing and expand into what at that time was the central wing of the Faculty. Eyebrows were raised; concerns were expressed from other, jealous, departments. But, it was just another sign of Dr. Olson’s success.

With all his responsibilities
as departmental leader, Dr. Olson still found time to pursue his own research program. During his tenure in the Department of Biochemistry, he served as major advisor to 11 graduate students studying for their M.Sc. or Ph.D. degree and as mentor to four postdoctoral fellows. His international reputation as a leader in Vitamin A research continued to grow.

Surely, if Dr. Olson had continued longer than he did as Chairman, the Department would have continued to innovate, thrive and expand under his guidance. However, he wisely recognized when it was time to pass that authority and responsibility to a Thai colleague and, equally wisely, recommended in 1973 that Dr. Serene assume the Chair. To date, Dr. Serene has been succeeded by seven dedicated Chairs, all of whom have added to the success and reputation of the Department of Biochemistry, and all of whom would surely agree that they had learned much from Dr. Olson’s example.

Most readers will know that after Jim Olson left the Department, he served with The Rockefeller Foundation for a period in Brazil — another international adventure — and then assumed the Chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics at Iowa State University. Jim served as Chair for 10 years as Professor and then Distinguished Professor. He continues today as Distinguished Professor of Liberal Arts and Sciences in that department, directing a large research group and adding regularly to his more than 400 research publications — and travelling abroad frequently with Giovanna for “professional purposes”.

I am sure that there is much of importance that I have forgotten to chronicle here and that there are many others who assisted Dr. Olson who should be ac-
knowledged. For that I apologize. However, rather than further probe my failing memory, I would like, before I close, to write more personally about James Allen Olson.

It was indeed a defining moment in my life when Dr. Olson walked into my laboratory at the University of Florida late one night in 1966, as I struggled to complete my dissertation research, and invited me to join him in Thailand. For me, this was the beginning of a continuing adventure of professional fulfillment and of personal romance with a country, culture and people that I have come to love as my own. That great good fortune, and much more, I owe to Dr. Olson.

Jim Olson was my first boss and, looking back, my best boss. With his help and by his examples, I learned to teach; I identified areas for life-long research; I refined my understandings of intellectual thought, professional integrity and personal sensitivitiy. I learned much from him of how to plan, to execute and to describe clearly and accurately. In many smaller but equally important ways, Dr. Olson profoundly influenced my future professional and personal attitudes and behavior. Here are only a few examples.

Once, in a context I no longer can recall, Dr. Olson said simply: "Gordon, it is sometimes best to say nothing." I have appreciated that sound advice as much in the breach as in the practice, but, still, it has served me well and often - particularly in late afternoon faculty meetings.

From time to time, I went to Dr. Olson as my chairman with an idea that I was sure had great merit. I learned to anticipate one of three responses. The first was: "That's a thought." I quickly learned that this meant that my notion was without merit, and it should not be brought forth again. The second possible response was: "That's an 'interesting' thought."
Much refinement was needed, but there was at least potential merit in my thinking. The third response, the one I desired as a puppy dog desires a pat on the head from its master, was: “That’s a ‘ducky’ thought.” I like to think that some of the many students and young faculty who have heard the same three responses from me over the years hold my judgement in the same regard as I did that of my early mentor, Dr. Olson.

At some point, I discovered that Dr. Olson closed his professional letters with the following expression: “With kindest regards, I am (or, I remain), sincerely yours,” etc. I thought that wording so graceful and civilized that I adopted it for my own correspondence. Since then, every time I have ended a letter that way I have not failed to think of the graceful and civilized man who taught me.

But, this time I will close with Love, respect and congratulations to my Favorite Professor, James Allen Olson.

Gordon B. Bailey, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus,
Departments of Biochemistry and of Microbiology and Immunology, Morehouse School of Medicine
My Memory about J.A.O.

I joined the Department of Biochemistry at the Faculty of Science, Mahidol University early 1966. At that time Professor J.S. Dinning was the Rockefeller Foundation Representative to Thailand and was Acting Chairman of the Department of Biochemistry. There were 4 graduate students at that time, Vichai, Thepin, Vicha and Prayad. I was involved in teaching post-graduate courses and conducted a research on vitamin E. Early 1967, I left for a year of post-doctoral training at Donner Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley. After returning to Mahidol University in 1968, I joined the Department of Biochemistry headed by Professor James A. Olson with Gordon Bailey and J. Lon Pope, actively setting up the Department. In the Department, there were 5 graduate students; Orathai, Numnuan, Thiparat, Pen-
gnam and Jirapa. At that time, the Department was located on the third floor of the building in the old Faculty on Sri-Ayuthya Road, where it is now the Faculty of Pharmacy. This building is now being replaced by a new building.

Professor Stang Mongkol suk was the Dean of the Faculty of Science. During that time Professor Stang was closely looking after the construction of the “new” Faculty on Rama 6 Road, where it is now located. Late in 1968 we were the first Department to move into the new building, then in early 1969 others followed. The Department occupied the third floor of the Life Science wing and teaching of the first class of medical students started in June 1969. There were 50 bright and active young men and women with enthusiasm. All classes were conducted in English, and new way of active learning was used in the teaching. There were open-book examinations, which was never done before. Students were allowed to choose research projects in various Departments to work for their honor-program during their third and fourth years and graduated with B.Sc. in Medical Science, before going on to their clinical years at Ramathibodi Hospital.

It was the first time the preclinical teaching was conducted in a multi-disciplinary laboratory (MDL), where all classes were taught in the same laboratory and all preclinical departments used the same set of equipment and space for their teaching. Dr. Anek Singhakowin was the Director of MDL, he worked very hard heading a team of staffs who prepared all reagents, equipments and glassware for courses in biochemistry, microbiology, physiology, pharmacology, microanatomy and pathobiology, while teams of teachers came to teach their courses at MDL. This system is efficient and economical providing there is a good team of MDL staffs. This sys-
system is still used at the Faculty of Science until now.

Professor Olson laid down an excellent ground for the Department’s organization and management. Each staff had certain responsibility in the Department and the duty was voluntarily chosen by the individuals. Staffs were in charge of the central laboratory facility, store room, distilled water supply system, graduate student affairs and other management duties. On academic affairs, staffs chose to be course-coordinators and were in charge of planning, arranging time-table and lecturers and saw that all were going smoothly. The staffs felt they had their parts in building up and running the Department, sharing the responsibility and had sense of belonging. Moreover they felt they had freedom in choosing the area of responsibility they had skill and liked and felt at ease in their job. Graduate students were also allowed to volunteer in being custo-
dians of different major equipments. Thanit was in charge of the Ultra-centrifuge, Kanit was in charge of Cary Spectrophotometer, Jirapa was in charge of Spectrofluorometer etc.

The Department at that time was like a big family, everybody was concerned and involved in the Departmental affair. Not only the working environment, but the inter-personal human relation was also developed. The staffs had a monthly get together party, starting by visiting the Chairmen’s resident and rotated around other staffs’ houses. The families were invited, so we got to know Giovanna, Lisa, Eric and Dänniel Olson and Dotty, Lee, Amy and Josh Bailey. Later on, Ulrike Lichti, Claus Leitzmann, Raj Lakshman and Adrian Lamb joined the Department. Vichai, Orathai and Prayad also became the Departmental staffs. The Department grew bigger and our Departmental luncheon were in restaurants like Som-Dang, Ruen-Pae
and Dutchanee. Our annual outing included all staffs, families and graduate students. We spent week-ends on Koh Kradard, Pattaya Beach etc. The intimate relationship among staffs and students was created which was possible through the excellent organization of Patcharee and Thitika, our administrative staffs.

It is not possible to mention all names that were pioneers in shaping up the Department under the guidance of Professor J. A. Olson.

Professor Olson is not only an excellent administrator, but is also an outstanding researcher and gifted teacher. He could turn a very difficult topic into a simple bedside story through his well-organized lectures. Everyone is impressed to hear him talk. His personality is gentle, humble and polite. During my association with him, I had never heard unkind words or seen him being angry or upset. I can sincerely say that he is the gentleman of all time.

I wish I had more words to express my feelings and my appreciation for having a chance to know, to work with and to become colleague of Professor James Allen Olson. I feel he is the one who most deserved to receive the honorary doctorate degree from Mahidol University. On this happy occasion, I wish him and his family the best of everything.

Congratulations, Professor Olson!!!

Serene Piboonniyom Ph.D
Professor Emeritus
Mahidol University
20 September 1999
Jim Olson: Pioneer of Biochemistry in Thailand

Yongyuth Yuthavong

The first two modern biochemists in Thailand are both called Jim. One is Jim Dinning, who was the representative and co-ordinator of the biomedical development program of the Rockefeller Foundation at Faculty of Science, Mahidol University. The other is Jim Olson.

Jim Olson was Chairman of the Department of Biochemistry of the Faculty of Science. He can truly be said to be the person who laid the foundation for the flourishing “Mahidol school” of biochemists, presently holding numerous key positions in universities in Thailand, and indeed in neighboring countries like Indonesia and Malaysia.

I first met Jim when I was a student in the UK. I got a letter from Jim, asking to meet me when he came to London. Apart from my immediate family and Dr. Stang Mongkolsuk, the mentor who induced me away from the fate of being a clinician into a science career, noone else was that interested in my future plan. I had obtained a scholarship from the Thai Government to study organic chemistry, and found out that I liked physical organic biochemistry (in other word,
everything), to the extent that I decided to study enzyme kinetics for my doctoral degree. Jim asked me whether I would be interested in joining the Biochemistry Department when I finished the study. Until then it did not cross my mind that I would join his Department, because I has assumed all along that I would be joining the Department of Chemistry.

When I went back to Thailand, I got to talk with Jim once more. He repeated the invitation. I told him that I would have to make up my mind between choosing to pursue a career in physical chemistry in the Chemistry Department, or in biochemistry in his Department. Jim did not try to influence me, but he showed me around the Department. The congenial atmosphere of the Department, with keen colleagues and well equipped laboratories finally lured me there. Looking back over thirty years from that date, I can say that I made the right decision, thanks to Jim.

The Department was very active in graduate teaching and research, with a number of foreign staff members, including Gordon Bailey, Ulrike Lichti, M. R. Lakshman and Claus Leitzmann. Among the pre-clinical departments set up in the Rockefeller program, Biochemistry was the most advanced and successful, with the possible exception of Microbiology. I was only the second "doctoral" Thai staff member, after Dr. Serene Vimokesant (now Pibooniyom), but I was soon joined by Dr. Suwit Piankijagum, Dr. Montri Chulavatnatol and Dr. Sakol Panyim. Dr. M. R. Jisnuson Svasti came much later. Jim and I saw this young man who came to visit the Department, and we were so impressed that we agreed that I should write to invite him to consider joining the Department—a case of a convert recruiting another convert.
Soon after Dr. Montri joined the Department, he and I agreed that we should write a textbook, the first textbook of biochemistry in Thai. Jim encouraged me to write a proposal to the Rockefeller Foundation co-ordinating office. We were very happy to be awarded the grant, a hefty sum of about 200,000 baht which allowed us even to hire a special assistant for the purpose of preparing manuscripts. Jim was an author, along with Serene, Suwit, Sakol, Montri and myself, and the volume editor was Montri. I got a copy of this book when I was in UCLA, doing my post-doctoral work. I showed it to Paul Boyer, my advisor, who shook my hand in congratulation.

The firm foundation that Jim built while he was Chairman allowed the Department to grow from strength to strength. The Department acquired a tradition of excellence in research and teaching, to which is testified by the number of awards given to its staff members, the number of international publications, and perhaps most importantly, the number of distinguished graduates who went on to successful careers. The Rockefeller Foundation program at the Faculty of Science, Mahidol University, is by far the most successful case of overseas assistance for development of science and technology in Thailand. Jim was a big part of it.

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I was probably one of the last staff members of the Biochemistry Department to come and join the department from abroad while Jim was Head of Department. As is well known, the Rockefeller Foundation played an important role in establishing the Faculty of Science, together with our first dean Prof. Stang Mongkolsuk. I was a foreigner in the sense that, most people who returned in the 1970's were those who received government scholarships to study abroad and return to serve the Faculty of Science to replace the Rockefeller Foundation staff, while I was an “independent” who joined the faculty without any strings attached. Also since three-quarters of my life were spent abroad, returning to work in Bangkok also required some readjustment.

I use the title JA0 for this article, because the intialling of circulars in Jim’s day gave me the name of JS.

I suppose I must have been quite young and naive at the time, and took everything pretty much for granted. But thinking back to those days, one realises how important an influence Jim
was to the Biochemistry department. I only had a year under Jim as Head of Department, but he certainly made a major contribution in laying a firm foundation for departmental administration, that was open, fair, and respected the wishes of its members. This administrative system set up by Jim served the department for many generations of department heads, and allowed the department to take the (then) innovative move of selecting a department head every 4 years, as early as in 1976, long before the Mahidol University constitution stipulated a finite term for department head. I use the title JAO for this article, because the initialling of circulars in Jim’s day gave me the name of JS.

Jim Olson was also a first-class scientist, and well-known worldwide for his life-long study of the non-visual function of vitamin A. I have had the chance to invite him back to speak at two regional meetings of the Federation of Asian and Oceanian Biochemists in 1983 and in 1994, and on each occasion enjoyed listening to recent advances in vitamin A function, much of it contributed by his group.

As a Head of Department, Jim was also strongly supportive of young staff members. And even before I returned from my Ph.D. studies in Cambridge, he already made enquiries of the equipment I would need for my research when I returned. I am grateful for Jim in helping me to get established and settled down at Mahidol, and I congratulate him on receiving his well-deserved Honorary Doctorate from Mahidol University.

Professor Dr. M.R. Jisnuson Svasti
Department of Biochemistry
Faculty of Science
Mahidol University
Bangkok, Thailand.
On the occasion of his being granted an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy from Mahidol University, I would like to express my sincere congratulations to Professor Dr. James A. Olson. He much deserves this long overdue honor because he has contributed tremendously to the teaching and research of modern biochemistry in Thailand. His initiatives and insights in this field during his chairmanship at the Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Science, Mahidol University not only built up this premier institution but also underpinned the rapid development of molecular and cell sciences throughout Thailand. Within the limited space, no one can do justice in describing Professor Olson’s numerous professional achievements and his outstanding scientific career. However, I wish to take this opportunity to illustrate one of Professor Olson’s leadership role in publishing the first Thai textbook of biochemistry.

As the leader, Professor Olson himself also contributed to the writing. In September 1973, the first Thai textbook "Biochemistry" by the 6 authors was first published.
In early 1970s, recognizing the urgent need then for a modern biochemistry textbook in Thai suitable for undergraduate students in medical and life sciences, Professor Olson requested a grant of US$ 4,000 (US$ 1 = THB 21 then) from the Rockefeller Foundation to support the writing and publishing of the first Thai textbook of biochemistry. With the grant, he led a team of 5 Thai faculty members of the Department, namely Dr. Serene Vimokesant, Dr. Yongyuth Yuthavong, Dr. Suwit Phankijagum, Dr.Montri Chulavatnatol and Dr. Sakol Panyim, to carry out the mission. As the leader, Professor Olson himself also contributed to the writing. In September 1973, the first Thai textbook “Biochemistry” by the 6 authors was first published. It quickly became the standard text for students in several institutions. Its popularity led to the subsequent publication of 3 revised editions in 1978, 1987 and 1999. The income from sale was used to cover the production cost of the later editions and hence no addition fund was needed. In each revision, not only was the text updated, additional faculty members were also invited to join the group of authors. So the textbook is truly the result of a combined effort of the Department. This is very much in accordance with Professor Olson’s original intent to make the textbook a lasting contribution of the Department to the learning of biochemistry of Thai students. For 26 years, countless number of Thai students have benefited greatly from the textbook. Many have since become successful scientists contributing the progress of the country. This textbook story clearly demonstrates how Professor Olson’s sharp insight has fueled the progress of biochemical and cellular sciences in this country.

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13 September, 1999
Dr. Olson : A Man We Should Be Grateful To

Bhinyo Panijpan

I was a "junior" staff-member working in the Department headed by Dr. Olson in 1967 at the old Faculty of Science site (present-day Faculty of Pharmacy). He showed me the "hi-tech" CPK molecular models and asked me to do something with them and hence the Model Building practical which is now taught and tutored on the computer screen. In 1969, Dr. Olson also suggested that I should pursue a biophysics Ph.D. degree with less emphasis on single crystal X-ray structural analysis because the machine would not be available to me in Thailand upon my return. He was right and I have been grateful to him for his advice.

Naturally, I had attended his lectures and seminars and learned what I could about delivering systematic, informative and clear talks.

I recall fondly the departmental outings to resorts, lunches in fine restaurants and parties at various staffs' residences that lasted until 1975. Those events were pleasurable and bond building.

I was aware of some "futuristic" areas in those days to appreciate Dr. Olson's great interest in developmental biology which led him to collaborate with Dr. Lewis Wolpert. Although I have never done anything in the field, the thinking originated then has in-
fluenced my interest and grasp of the developmental problems.

The "Biochem Phenomenon" which has followed since his departure in the middle of nineteen seventies is directly the result of his earlier masterly organization of the Department and lasting inspiration of the Thai staff-members. Dr. Olson was assisted in many ways in setting up a first-rate Department by Dr. Dinning, Bailey, Serene, Lakshmanan, Lichti, Leitzman, Lamb and others. Also, the first few batches of graduate students, some among our staff-members, and Ramathibodi medical students have also featured prominently in moving the Department ahead. Dr. Olson was at the center of it all when it was happening.

He was right and I have been grateful to him for his advice.

Bhinyo Panijpan, Ph.D.
Associate Professor,
Department of Biochemistry
Faculty of Science
Mahidol University
Bangkok, Thailand.
My Memory of Professor Dr James Allen Olson

Vichai Boonsaeng

First of all, I would like to congratulate Professor Dr. James Allen Olson for receiving an Honorary Doctor of Science Degree from Mahidol University this year, this will be conferred to him by H.M. the King, on October 14, 1999. It is a great pleasure for me to write in memory of Dr. Olson.

I remember the moment when I first met Dr. Olson in 1966 (33 years ago), that was his first time to visit Thailand, upon an invitation from Professor Dr. Stang Mongkolsuk, Dean of the Faculty of Science at that time, and Professor Dr. James S. Dinning, Director of the Rockefeller Foundation in Thailand. This trip was intended, for one or two weeks, to see whether he and his family would be happy enough to stay in Thailand while he developed a Biochemistry Department at the Faculty of Science, Mahidol Univer-

I was impressed very much about his way to recruit students. One way of recruitment was to invite top students from various institutions to have lunch in restaurants in Bangkok and showed them the Biochemistry Department.
sity. I was very lucky that Professor Dr. Stang Mongkolsuk had assigned me to be a guide to take Dr. Olson for sightseeing and show him around Bangkok. I set in mind to give him a good impression in order to attract him to stay on by showing him the Emerald Buddha, the Grand Palace, the Temple of Dawn and the Floating Market at Ratchaburi Province; because I was told that he was a very famous biochemist with very high caliber. Most of his research was about vitamin A and he had a lot of international publications. At that time it was very hard for Thai scientists doing research in Thailand to publish even just one paper in international journals.

I still remember that his office at the early days was on the third floor of the back building of the old Faculty of Science on Sri Ayutthaya Road. It is now the Faculty of Pharmacy. There were only empty rooms. With his charisma, sooner or later, Drs. Gordon Bailey, J. Lon Pope, M.R. Lakshmann, A. J. Lamb, C. Leitzmann and U. Lichti joined the Department. They worked very hard because they had to install both light and heavy equipment both for research and teaching. Meanwhile Dr. Olson gradually developed the Graduate Program in Biochemistry leading both to the Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees aimed at the international standard.

I am sure I did not fail to achieve my intention; Dr. Olson decided to come back to establish the Department. I was very pleased.

I was impressed very much about his way to recruit students. One way of recruitment was to invite top students from various institutions to have lunch in restaurants in Bangkok and showed
them the Biochemistry Department. By this way, he succeeded in attracting good and bright students to do both Master’s and Ph.D. degrees here. Dr. Olson also attracted good students from the Southeast Asian region such as from Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines to do the graduate studies in our Department; thus achieving the targeted goal set off by Professor Dr. Stang Mongkolsuk in setting up a regional center for graduate study in Southeast Asia.

Under his supervision, Dr. Olson’s students, Ph.D., Master’s or even Medical undergraduates, produced research results publishable in international journals. I was extremely excited, as I take this as a new page in the Thai research history; these papers, published internationally by Thai students were produced locally and were of great demand from all over the globe, as requests for reprints poured in.

Dr. Olson is not only an excellent researcher and an outstanding teacher, but also a good administrator. His teaching is modern and up to date. He has a very far vision. Then, he created an atmosphere for training the graduate students by organizing the meeting both at the level of laboratory and departmental seminar. The graduate students would take turn speaking. I remember that most of the speakers were so excited and some of them even would go through an arrangement to postpone their own schedules, or would prepare beforehand the questions for friends to ask during their seminars, in order to show that they were knowledgeable about the topic they presented, and to cut short questions from Archam which might be more difficult to answer. Anyhow, all students gradually got used to this system and sat in the library more often and for longer hours in order to be more well prepared. This finally
led to an excellent academic atmosphere which served as a starting point for the overall international standard. It came to me ever since that research is an essential component of higher study, and research in science is international, there is no national boundary in science. This is the main principle that I have followed during my Ph.D. study later, my professional career and all other responsibilities, e.g. in advising graduate students, in my work at the Thailand Research Fund, etc.

I am certain that I, as one among the pioneer members of the Department, can go on listing what Dr. Olson had done to us, but space limit and memories from others should complement my short note, so I will not elaborate further. In conclusion, Dr. Olson is not only the founder of this Biochemistry Department, but also is the person who laid down the basis for both research and teaching in Biochemistry in Thailand.

Vichai Boonsaeng, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Biochemistry,
Faculty of Science, Mahidol University,
Director of Academic Research Division,
The Thailand Research Fund.

September 9, 1999
On the auspicious occasion of Mahidol University's conferring an Honorary Doctorate Degree to Distinguished Professor Dr. James Allen Olson, I am thankful for the opportunity to express my appreciation for our Archann Olson.

Prof. Olson established, in 1966, and laid down a profound and sound foundation for the Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Science at Mahidol University, and greatly contributed to develop as well as to put up the impetus for later development for the Department, in research and the Graduate Program in Biochemistry and in the strong science based medical curriculum for the Ramathibodi medical students. This was accomplished under an unfavorable environment and atmosphere of the early period of consolidating the Faculty of Science. Vision, planning, hard work and perseverance compounded to overcome all hindrances and bring about success. Dr. Olson really deserves the recognition and honor; even this might be overdue.

Under his leadership, and only in a short period of time after the establishment, the Department then was of international standard and I was marveled by the excellent academic atmosphere and total devotion of all members.
Late in 1970, when I first joined the Department fresh from graduate study, I learned a lot from Dr. Olson, academically and otherwise. As I look back, I feel somehow unfortunate because the immense hardship of the initial phase of the Department was already over, and I missed the chance to participate in the hardship and learn as much as those who joined earlier. Under his leadership, and only in a short period of time after the establishment, the Department then was of international standard and I was marveled by the excellent academic atmosphere and total devotion of all members, Rockefeller Foundation Visiting Professors, Thai staff and the most-intelligent-ever bunch of graduate students.

There were of course a lot more, despite aforesaid, to be learned from and be thankful for to Dr Olson. Nostalgia of the good old day, although quite long ago but still vivid, is the afternoon coffee time, when he was centered or cornered among and by us, chatting, and thus unknowingly transcending to us inspiration and virtuous academic attitude, etc. His encouragement and help in realizing the first quality Thai textbook of Biochemistry, etc. is still heart felt by those involved. A valuable early lesson I learned which I never forget is when he assigned me to negotiate with Archarn M.R. Buranapoke in the transfer of teaching the lecture course of Introductory Biochemistry to premedical students from the Department of Chemistry to that of ours. I always am thankful and attribute that to my a little more meaningful achievement in my career when I was entrusted with some administrative work both at the Faculty of Science and at the University level.

When I was awarded Model Teacher, in 1995, by Mahidol University Faculty
Council, and asked what I did to gain the recognition, my first and second reason in my answer to this question were; firstly I meebon (more than lucky, in my opinion) that I joined an institution staffed by good and capable people, and secondly I had good moral model to follow, such was the environment I had been in, so that I could not possibly turn bad by any means. Of course, Archarn Olson was in my mind as I mentioned those attributes with appreciation.

Thank you again, Archarn Olson, for what you did. Congratulations and best wishes to you and your family from the bottom of my heart.

Suwit Piankijagum, Ph.D
Assistant Professor,
Huachiew Chalermprakiet University
Bangkok, Thailand
September 9, 1999
Who !!!

Where !!!

When !!!
My dear Professor Olson

Pichit Tosukhowong

Sincere congratulations to you on this auspicious occasion. I am proud to be one of your students. You have given me not only vitamin A, but also many other valuable aspects of life.

Pichit Tosukhowong Ph.D.
Assistant Professor,
Dean, Faculty of Science,
Ubon Ratchathani University
I had to buy several kilos of lobster. After taking eggs out the meat was cooked, and everybody in the lab enjoyed wonderful lobster salad or other dishes invented.

In my feeling it was not very long ago that I first met Dr. Olson. My first impression was that he is a very kind person with a gentle smile. In fact when he told me that the research topic that I should do for my Master Thesis would be about beta-carotene, a pro-vitamin A, and its metabolic pathway in rat. I didn’t feel like working with animals at all. I remembered that there was a paper about guppy fish can cleave beta-carotene to retinol, and I had tried to inject some carp fish and killed them all. With such an experience then, using rat seemed to be a much better solution.

The best time was when starting material should be lobster eggs. I has to go into a cold room at the port, to select lobster with eggs only. For one kilogram of eggs, I had to buy several kilos of lobster. After taking eggs out the meat was cooked, and everybody in the lab enjoyed wonderful lobster salad or other dishes invented. I think that it was the best project I did in my life. Now and then we would have a luncheon seminar and student has to sit with invited guest and told our guest what we were doing. Not only lobster party and
discussion over lunch, during holidays, in summer, we all went to the beach, some islands or hiking at Khao Yai National Park. Students were close to advisors and their families. Indeed I felt that I was a member of a wonderful big family.

I was very proud when Dr. Olson let me try to be baby sitter of his children: Lisa, Daniel and Eric when he had to travel out of the country with Giovanna. It was fun to stay with them, and they were very responsible kids but quite active most of the time. When I left Mahidol University and began my teaching career, Dr. Olson had left Thailand and came back to join us in several occasions.

The FAOBMB SYM POSIUM in 1994 was one of them. We were very happy to see that our professor was still young and active as he was several years back. Vitamin A was still his research area, and we were very impressed by his accumulating knowledge on the subject.

Dr. James A. Olson is a professor of this Millenium and will continue to be until the next Millenium Chai Yo, Chai Yo, Chia Yo for the Honorary Degree for our beloved Arjan Olson.

With Respect and Love

Jariya Boonjawat, Ph.D.
Director, Southeast Asia START Regional Center
In Honorary of Professor James A Olson

Sumit Vatanavicharn

To my teacher,

In my memory, Professor James A. Olson is one of my impressed teachers that I have had. He is very polite and smart person. His eyes look warm and sympathy.

In my opinion, he devotes the most of his life for research work especially on Vitamin A. Hence he is generally accepted to be one of the world famous Vitamin A expert.

Sumit Vatanavicharn (Rengpian) MD.,Ph.D
Associate Professor
Division of Hematology
Department of Medicine, Siriraj Hospital
Faculty of Medicine Mahidol University

N:B, Sumit Rengpian is a Ph.D. student of Biochemistry in 1969.
To Dr. Olson with gratitude and respect

Wallie Suvachittanont

Between 1967-1969, I was a postgraduate student working for a Master Degree at the Biochemistry Department, Mahidol University under the supervision of Professor Dr. James Allen Olson before becoming a lecturer at the Prince of Songkla University in Southern Thailand. Dr. Olson was an excellent supervisor and never was too busy to give advice if needed. But at the same time he also left plenty of room for me to develop my own skill towards working independently. Through my thesis, he had indirectly taught English conversation and writing which must be rather difficult for him to communicate to such a person who had never spoken English to any foreigner before.

Through Prof. Olson’s teaching, support and encouragement, he made me feel selfworth and proud to be one of his students. I can vividly remember the day when one of my thesis examiners asked me to do a little more of lab-work before approving my thesis. I was then so disappointed and sad that I left the lab. On coming back, there was a

On coming back, there was a little note lying on my desk “Wallie, it is not the end of the world! Come and see me, J.A. Olson”. He could sense how I felt........
little note lying on my desk "Wallie, it is not the end of the world! Come and see me, J.A.Olson". He could sense how I felt and assured me that the additional work was really minor and could be completed in a short time when in fact took only two weeks. His continuing support after I left the department made it possible for me to gain further experience and a higher degree in the USA and Australia. It is beyond any doubt, in my opinion, that Professor Olson is a good role model of excellent advisors of all time.

Dr. Olson was also chairman of the Biochemistry Department at that time and had kept the department accelerated with true leadership. He encouraged broader areas of biochemical research in the department, particularly those could be beneficial to Thailand. For example, Dr. Bailey worked on Entamoeba, Dr. Serene's work on Thiamine deficiency and his own work on prevention of vitamin A deficiency in Thai people. He even put himself under high dose of vitamin A injection to learn about the effect of hypervitaminosis A. Moreover, biochemistry students from both Chulalongkorn University and Siriraj Hospital were welcome to attend the lectures offered by the department. Such an arrangement was a very effective way of utilising the available resources.

Professor Olson had created a friendly happy and warm working atmosphere. He always uses nice words of compliment like ......great!, good!, or excellent! And his suggestions, comments and arguments on various aspects were taken with pleasure. He facilitated both academic and social activities. Many people in the department at that time must have enjoyed the regular Wednesday afternoon seminar with coffee and snack, the departmental lunch out at various nice restaurants in Bangkok and occasional excursion to places such
as Khao-Yai, Pattaya and several islands. To some, if not many of us, the department was just like our second home and Dr. Jariya used to call him “Tia”, a Chinese word meaning “Daddy”. Academically prominent guest speakers from various places around the world were invited to give seminar. One of the speakers invited during those years was Dr. Paul D. Boyer, who has recently been awarded earned a Nobel Prize. Academic staffs attended the FEBS meeting were asked to give a talk on current topics of biochemistry from the other side of the world to keep all of us informed.

As Dr. Olson wrote for the 30th Anniversary of the Biochemistry Department that “…the ground was ready, and the seed once implanted, grew luxuriously”…how true this statement turns out to be; for he was the one who made the ground ready and I was one of the seeds he implanted. I have learned from him since then how to live, learn and giving back to the society.

On the occasion of his receiving an Honorary Doctorate degree (Biochemistry) from Mahidol University, may this writing represents my appreciation and gratitude to Dr. Olson for many long-lasting contributions he has given to myself, to the Biochemistry Department at Mahidol University and to Thailand as a whole.

Wallie Suvachittanont (Watcharakorn), Ph.D.
Department of Biochemistry,
Faculty of Science,
Prince of Songkla University
Professor J.A.Olson : My beloved teacher

under his supervision, I used to his three main sentences; "May I suggest.......," "It depends on you (You have to make your own decision)" and the last one "It's nice"

Wanwalai Athivaspong

This is the time I've been waiting for. The time that I really happy to say the word "Congratulations" to the last formal teacher in my student lifetime, Professor Dr. James Allen Olson. His supervision for me has been exactly "the wind beneath my wings". What I'd been taught during those a period of years (1973-74) is very valuable experience and it has been used to solve my problems both official works and family life.

Flash back to 26 years ago as a M.Sc. student under his supervision, I used to his three main sentences; "May I suggest.......," "It depends on you (You have to make your own decision)" and the last one "It's nice". With those 3 sentences, I has been planted and has grown up strong and smart enough for facing the outside world. I would like to tell the hidden meaning of the three sentences to the one who would like to use it for kindly taking care of your own kids and students.

When I gathering all data, information and scattering ideas to postulate or even explain something what we need is the alternative point of view from another person. So "May I suggest......." is something the most valuable sentences for me. As the biochemist, may I remind all of you that the E. coli has 5 alternative rate limiting steps for aromatic amino
acid synthesis. I think that you agree with me that we need alternatives, especially for all Thais.

The second sentence: it depends on you, is the way that he treats me not as a student but as his research staff. Even though he was the one who in charge of the research grant. No one will give the responsibility to the kid. So my feeling was great! And I do carefully run all the jobs and that part of mine grew up day by day.

And the last, for “It’s nice” from Dr. Olson, everybody realizes that it is certainly more that nice by the other standard. This positive word means a lot for me. It encouraged me to break through the difficult situation many times. With his effort as a strong wind beneath my wings, I had finished the research work and it had been published in International Journal of Nutrition and I graduated with Master of Science in Biochemistry in 1975.

I am only one of hundreds of the graduates from the Department of Biochemistry. So as the pioneer head of the department, with his guidance, kindly respect the other and his encouragement to not only the students but the academic and support staffs, Prof. Dr. James Allen Olson certainly has created the remarkable and valuable work for our beloved country through the biochemistry graduates.

May you feel my deep gratitude and congratulations to you again.

Wanwalai Athivaspong, M.Sc.
Assistant Professor,
Vice President for Planning and Development,
Ubon Ratchathani University
I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to be one of Dr. Olson’s students at Mahidol University during 1968-1970. At that time I selected a project on installation and application of newly arrived equipment, many of them were the first in Thailand. It was a big challenge for me since I had to start from scratch. Whenever I had difficulties and needed advice, Dr. Olson did not hesitate to find time in his busy schedule to help me. His continuous support made it possible for me to go through all the crisis during that period.

The Biochemistry department was growing rapidly under Dr. Olson’s leadership. He had created a wonderful research atmosphere one could imagine. It was my great experience to be associated with excellent staff, competent and considerate fellow students, and laboratory with all necessary facilities. We are very proud of his hard work, dedication, academic excellence and good guidance to the department. Aside from all academic work, we had lots of good time filled with fun and cheers. His integrity proves a strong foundation for sustainable development of the department as is presently evident.

On this auspicious occasion that Dr. Olson was awarded an Honorary Doctoral Degree from Mahidol University, it is not only one other achievement to add on to his several accomplishments, but it is a recognition and gratitude for his contributions to the Biochemistry Department, Mahidol University and our tertiary education as a whole. It is indeed my great pleasure and pride to be his student.

Sompol Prakongpan, Ph.D.
Professor of Pharmacy
Faculty of Pharmacy,
Mahidol University
เพราะน้ำหนึ่ง
เพราะน้ำหนึ่ง

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ปีรับ แล้วคนจีรบ
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แพทย์
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