

Jay A. Siegel, Ph.D. died at home in his sleep on September 25, 2017, in Mt. Arlington, New Jersey due to heart failure. He was 71.

Jay is survived by his wife Margaret Wilke of Mt. Arlington, NJ; his daughter Samantha Linehan and her husband Nick of Hackettstown, NJ, and son Paul Siegel of Brooklyn, NY; and his two grandsons Tommy and Ben Linehan of Hackettstown, NJ. He is also survived by his two sisters Judy Siegel of Gaithersburg, MD and Pam Douglas and her husband Ed of Las Vegas, NV.



Jay was born on April 16, 1946, in Washington D.C. to Samuel and Mae Siegel. He graduated from George Washington University with a doctorate degree in chemistry in 1975. He married Margaret Wilke in 1976. After working as a forensic chemist with the Virginia Bureau of Forensic Sciences, Jay spent over 35 years as a forensic science educator and researcher at Metropolitan State College in Denver, CO, Michigan State University (Professor Emeritus) in East Lansing, MI, and Indiana University Purdue University in Indianapolis, IN, where he also served as a department chair. Several forensic sciences undergraduate and graduate programs blossomed under his leadership. Jay was an author and editor of several forensic science books and editor in chief of the massive Encyclopedia of Forensic Sciences. He was honored as a Distinguished Fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and as a Distinguished Alumni Scholar at The George Washington University.

Jay was proud of his children and grandchildren and enjoyed spending time with family and friends. For over 30 years, he annually gathered many friends for 5-day trips to the Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, Ontario, where he organized play tickets, lodging, and meals, all through his in-name-only travel agency, Miracle Travel. These wonderful times together will be sorely missed by his friends, including his good-natured competitiveness when sitting down at a card table. Jay was outstanding in the classroom—both demanding and engaging. So memorable were his stories about his forensic science cases that after he retired, he was employed by cruise lines to do onboard lectures for the cruise guests on days at sea. They were very well attended, especially after the word spread: “You have to hear this guy!” He stayed connected with people across the globe through his world travels, especially his five trips with wife Maggie to visit friends and see Australia. He will be remembered as an excellent teacher, mentor, husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, and friend.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the charity of your choice.

This past week the forensic science community lost an influential and dedicated leader, Dr. Jay Siegel. "Just Science" is releasing a special "Just So You Know" episode interviewing Dr. Max Houck and John Collins, two of Dr. Siegel's closest colleagues. In this short episode, we remember a kind-hearted, dedicated educator of forensic scientists, whose reach was felt internationally. The community has lost someone who is considered a forefather for education in forensics, please join us as we celebrate a life that gave so much to his beloved community.

https://soundcloud.com/just_science/just-so-you-know-dr-jay-siegel_special-release