
EDITORIAL

Eager to Learn, Proud to Serve

It is not unusual that students return to McCrone Research Institute (McRI) after taking their first course here. It is unusual that they return eight or more additional times and that they have an employer with the means and foresight to see the importance of investing in their employee's education. Such is the case with one of our finest alumni, Gene Lawrence.

Like so many of our students, Gene was introduced to formal microscopy education through his first professional employer. In Gene's case, this was the Texas Department of Public Safety Law Enforcement Academy in Austin, Texas. He then moved to the San Diego County Sheriff's Crime Lab and took "Advanced Microscopy" at the California Criminalistics Institute (CCI) taught by John Delly of McRI before enrolling in his first class at the institute in Chicago. Gene was particularly fortunate because he was one of only two students taught by Dr. McCrone that year in "Crystal Morphology."

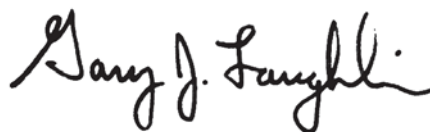
Gene went on to take many more courses at McRI by some of the finest microscopists in the world today, including: "Microchemical Methods," "Introduction to the Techniques of Forensic Soil Comparison" and "Forensic Paint Microscopy and Microanalysis" all taught by Skip Palenik; "Advanced FTIR Microscopy" taught by John Reffner, Anna Teetsov and Ken Smith; "Micro-technique for the Examination of Drugs and Other Evidence" taught by Joe Koles; "Optical Crystallography and the Spindle Stage" taught by Don Bloss, Mickey Gunter, Su Chun Su and Rob Weaver; "Microscopy of Explosives" taught by Gary Laughlin; and "Wood and Vegetable Fiber Microscopy" taught by John Shane. This makes for a pretty impressive résumé and one that anyone would be proud to have.

In addition, Gene also applied for and received Certification in Applied Chemical Microscopy through McRI. Gene had to pass a rigorous practical proficiency test and a comprehensive written examination. This he did, with more than one reviewer stating that he "more than successfully demonstrated the knowledge of the field of chemical microscopy." In 2007, Gene earned his certificate in chemical microscopy and published some of his research in a paper in *The Microscope*.

So where is Gene now? Last time I saw him, he was here in class and mentioned that he was moving back to the Texas Department of Public Safety and that he was in the National Guard and that *might* keep him busy for a while. Not long after returning to Austin, he was mobilized and today finds himself in Iraq. Field Artillery Battery Commander CPT Gene Lawrence writes in his e-mail: "I would love to get *The Microscope* here. I feel like I am forgetting everything! When I get back home, I am afraid that when I see my microscope I am going to wonder which end the bullets come out!"

If you would like to write to Gene, his e-mail address is gene.lawrence@iraq.centcom.mil. He expects to be in Iraq until August 2009.

I want to wish Gene the best and thank him for serving his country and remembering *The Microscope*.



Gary J. Laughlin, Editor