Professor Richard Kremer

Richard Kremer is Associate Professor of History at Dartmouth College, where he teaches courses in the history of science, medicine and technology. He earned a BA from Goshen College and a PhD in the History of Science from Harvard University. He specializes in European science from the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries with a particular interest in early modern astronomy and physics, and the history of the medical sciences and universities. His books include The Thermodynamics of Life and Experimental Physiology (Garland 1990), a study of experiment in nineteenth-century medicine; Letters of Hermann von Helmholtz to His Wife, 1849-1859 (Steiner 1990), an edition of early letters by a leading German physicist and cultural icon; and The Practice of Alfonsine Astronomy in the Fifteenth Century (forthcoming), an analysis of early printed almanacs. Kremer's current research examines responses to Copernican astronomy in astrological calendars printed between 1543-1630. His work has been supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, National Science Foundation, Humboldt Foundation, and the Howard Foundation.
(Source: www.dartmouth.edu)

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Rhode Island College

Fourteenth Annual Richard K. Gehrenbeck Memorial Lecture

Launching American Astrophysics: An Astronomer, an Instrument, and a Book

Professor Richard Kremer
Dartmouth College

Tuesday, April 28, 2009
8:00 pm

John Clarke Science Building
Room 128
Rhode Island College, Providence, RI

All are welcome.
Launching American Astrophysics:
An Astronomer, an Instrument, and a Book

Charles A. Young, professor of natural philosophy and astronomy at Dartmouth College from 1866-77, became one of America’s first internationally acclaimed astrophysicists by virtue of two classics—an instrument and a book. His multi-prism, double-pass spectroscope, built by Alvin Clark & Sons, exposed the technical limit of attempts to increase dispersion by adding prisms, a limit reached just as Rowland’s gratings became available. Young's book on the Sun, however, joined a successful trend, published in the International Scientific Series. These wildly popular books began appearing in London in the 1870s; by the 1880s American editions were being printed by D. Appleton & Company in New York. Through these books, authors such as Darwin, Spencer, Tyndall, Lockyer, Wurtz, Marey, etc., popularized the late nineteenth-century sciences. And Young became known as America's premier solar physicist.

Richard Keith Gehrenbeck
Professor, Rhode Island College
1934-1993

Richard Keith Gehrenbeck taught physics and astronomy at Rhode Island College for 22 years. He designed and taught a course in the history of science, “The Rise of Modern Science.” Though the course was not listed as a lab course, Dick's students all did substantial experimental projects that replicated significant experiments, reconstructed historic scientific apparatus, or in some other way made the subject concrete and immediate. During one sabbatical, Dick constructed a heliostat in the College’s optics lab. With this device he was able to use the light of the sun to demonstrate many of the principles of optics. Dick always felt that astronomy, too, should have a “hands-on” component, and he offered several night sections of the course that involved celestial observations. Dick also wrote articles and delivered papers on the history of physics and astronomy.

Dick Gehrenbeck was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1934. He grew up in White Bear Lake, Minnesota. He was salutatorian of White Bear Lake High School in 1952 and graduated magna cum laude in physics and mathematics from Macalester College in 1956. He began graduate work at the University of Pennsylvania, then spent three years teaching at the Gerard Institute in Sidon, Lebanon. In 1958 he returned from Lebanon to marry Rita Reynolds, and the two returned to Lebanon together and taught for two more years. After Dick and Rita completed their assignments in Lebanon, they returned to Minnesota where Dick finished his M.A. in Nuclear Physics at the University of Minnesota. He then took a teaching position at Park College, in Parkville, Missouri, starting in 1962. It was at this time that their three children were born: Anne, Nancy, and David. In 1969 Dick returned to the University of Minnesota where he completed his Ph.D., and in 1972 the family moved to Rhode Island, where Dick taught until his death.

For Dick, community service came as second nature. He was an active member of the Providence Presbyterian Church, where he was an elder, trustee, choir member, Sunday School music leader, and chief pancake maker. An Eagle Scout, he founded Cub Scout Pack 15 and served as its Cubmaster. He was active in support of the Smith Hill Branch of the Providence Public Library and sang bass in the Schubert Chorus of the German Dramatic Club.

Richard Gehrenbeck's quiet presence, intellectual honesty, high academic standards, concern for individuals, and sense of joy enriched his students, colleagues, family, and community.