

Ramon M. Barnes (24.04.1940 – 06.07.2026)

Prof. Ramon Barnes finished his Ph.D. in analytical chemistry at the University of Illinois in 1966 and from 1968 to 1969 he was a postdoctoral research fellow at the Iowa State University. He then joined the University of Massachusetts (UMass, Amherst) where he taught analytical chemistry, with a focus on spectrochemical analysis from 1969 to 2000. After his retirement, he remained at UMass as Professor Emeritus of Chemistry.

To remember Prof. Barnes is to remember energy—inexhaustible energy to create and keep knowledge flowing and to help people learn and develop. His exceptional commitment to analytical chemistry was outstanding, reflecting a lifelong dedication to spectrochemical analysis, particularly plasma spectrochemistry. As he said in an interview with *The Analytical Scientist* in 2021: “I look at my career as one of public service – be it academic, industrial, or educational.”¹

In addition to his scientific contributions to this field, Prof. Barnes created the famous “Winter Conference on Plasma Spectrochemistry,” which has now been running for 40 years in the United States, followed by spin-off meetings in Europe and sometimes in Asia-Pacific countries. Anyone who has had the opportunity to participate in these meetings will testify to the hard work carried out by the professor and his team in bringing to all attendees a wonderful learning experience in a friendly atmosphere. How can one forget his beautiful (but not discrete!) Hawaiian shirts? Or the punctuality of the bell ringing to signal the restarting of sessions after coffee breaks? Hey, folks, let’s get back and get some work done!

Furthermore, it’s impossible not to recognize the professor’s dedication in founding the “ICP Information Newsletter” in 1975, which he went on to edit for decades. Over the years, I have had the wonderful opportunity to visit the Barnes research group in Amherst several times and I never ceased to be amazed by his commitment to bringing this updated compilation of plasmas in analytical chemistry to the ICP community. Absolutely admirable!

Later, Prof. Barnes founded and acted as the Director of the University Research Institute for Analytical Chemistry (URIAC) to foster education and research in spectrochemical analysis.

The professor also made major contributions in the area of sample preparation regarding inorganic analysis, with an emphasis on microwave-assisted sample preparation. In the 1990s he started the “Workshop on Sample Preparation,” held at UMass, and he was instrumental in bringing this workshop to Brazil, starting in 1996 at the Center for Nuclear Energy Agriculture (USP, Piracicaba) with Prof. Francisco José Krug as the chairman and reaching its XIV edition, 30th anniversary, in 2026 at the Federal University of Pelotas (RS). This sequence of workshops was essential to building a solid community in this field in Brazil with an appreciable international impact. The presence of Prof. Barnes at almost all of the workshops held in several Brazilian universities was decisive in consolidating this event. He also played an important role in helping to bring specialists from abroad to collaborate in these workshops.

The fact that Prof. Barnes was always willing to return to Brazil and his readiness to share with us his huge experience in analytical chemistry was both impressive and unforgettable. His contributions to the development of spectrochemical analysis and sample preparation were recognized during the 17th Brazilian Meeting on Analytical Chemistry (Belo Horizonte, MG, 2013), where he presented a conference and received an award for his contributions to the development of analytical chemistry in Brazil. Recently, he was also honored in the XIV Workshop on Sample Preparation.

I could not conclude this tribute to Prof. Barnes without mentioning his adorable wife, Dorothy. I think it is better to allow the professor to speak for himself: “Yes, I’d like to mention my wife, Dorothy. We’ve been married for over 50 years, after meeting as graduate students at the University of Illinois. She’s much smarter than I am and certainly much more of a people-person! I’ve learned a great deal from her, and I appreciate all her encouragement and patience over the years. Without her, I think I’d not be doing what I’m doing. She deserves plenty of credit!” ¹

What a great partners! We feel privileged to have known them. Thank you, Ramon; we so appreciate all that you achieved. It has been an honor to learn from you and is our mission to follow in your footsteps.

Reference

1. James Strachan, Public Service Spectroscopy, *The Analytical Scientist* **2021**. Available at: <https://theanalyticalscientist.com/issues/2021/articles/aug/public-service-spectroscopy/> (accessed on August 2026).

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