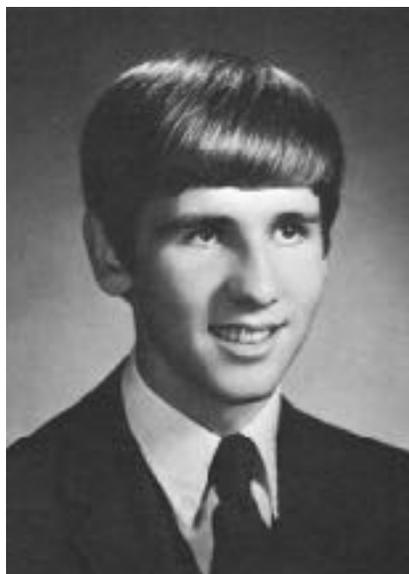


Steven J. Rakow, Ph.D. Biography



Steven James Rakow, Ph.D.,
- Class of 1971 - b. 1953 d.
June 10, 2001 From the EHS
Yearbook, The Maroon:
Activities: Swimming 2, 3, 4;
Captain 4; Class Council 3, 4;
Sr. A Cappella 2, 3, 4,
President 4; Boys Ensemble.

Steven James Rakow , a local
Houston TX college professor
enthusiastically dedicated to
the teaching of science to the
young, died Saturday. He was
48.

Rakow died of brain injuries from a bicycle accident this winter, friends said.

A native of Elgin, Ill., Steven Rakow is an assistant professor of science education at the University of Houston-Clear Lake, where he teaches courses in elementary science methods and education research. He also teaches a class of fourth-grade gifted and talented students for a local school district. His research interests include the status of minority (especially Hispanic) students in science education and the use of computers in science education. He is a past editor of Science Scope, the National Science Teachers Association journal for middle and junior high school teachers.

Nationally known in his field, the Houston man wrote more than a dozen books or book chapters, more than 100 articles and technical reports and served as president of the National Science Teachers Association.

“He was just the ultimate teacher,” said friend and colleague Linda Robinson of the Alvin Independent School District. She said his influence was exponential because he did things like help schools extend on-the-job teacher training from a few weeks to a whole year. He helped working teachers, would-be teachers and generations of students, she said. “I wish I could have captured his enthusiasm. He was the type of guy who bounded down the hall.”

The bike accident was in February. Rakow was hit by a car at a Midtown intersection and has been hospitalized in varying states of health since, according to his life partner, Terry Brandhorst. Brandhorst kept Rakow’s friends updated with a Web page. Since the accident, Rakow received more than 2,000 e-mails from former students and well-wishers, Robinson said.

“His passing has left a huge void not only at the university, but also with those whose lives he touched across the state and nation,” said Dennis Spuck, dean of the University of Houston-Clear Lake School of Education.

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Rakow got his bachelor's degree in chemistry at Illinois State University, his master's degree in education at the College of St. Thomas and his doctorate in science education from the University of Minnesota.

Spuck said Rakow, who joined the university in 1984, was a gifted teacher because he could relate to any audience. "He was as at home sitting on the floor and telling stories to little kids as he was talking to engineers at Johnson Space Center," Spuck said.

Rakow was active in creating educational exhibits including "The Way Things Work" at the Children's Museum of Houston where director of education Cheryl McCallum called him a "servant to the field" and his death a "national loss."

He was an organ player who wrote music and annual Christmas carols for friends and loved show tunes. He sang in several church choirs.

Rakow is survived by Brandhorst; his sister, Diane Rakow of Long Beach, Calif.; his mother, Lois Rakow of Elgin, Ill.; and his father, James Rakow of Algonquin, Ill.