



# The Maryland Orchid Society Newsletter

September 2020

Website: [www.marylandorchids.org](http://www.marylandorchids.org)

## 2020 September's President's Message



### Acting President's Message September 2020

Hello MOS Members,

It has been such a long time since we have been together sharing our lovely orchids. A lot has happened and yet nothing has happened.

The Board got together via Zoom in July and decided that an effort would be made to hold our monthly meeting by way of Zoom on September 17 at 7:00 PM and hopefully thereafter. Clark Riley will be sending out information and directions on how to log into Zoom. I encourage all of you to join this meeting as we want to install John Heinbokel as the next President of MOS.

It is with much sorrow that I am letting you know of the passing of our longtime member and friend, Mark Robbins. Mark passed quite suddenly on August 13. We will miss Mark and his beautiful Paphs. More information as to arrangements will follow. Please see *The Sun* obituary in this Newsletter.

This will officially be my last "President's Message". I have greatly enjoyed the past 6 years as your President and prior to that, as Vice President and before that as Secretary. It is now time to go forward with some "new blood". I encourage all of you to continue to give John Heinbokel the same support that that you have given me. I look forward to enjoying being "just a regular member" of MOS and continuing as Membership Chair.

Speaking of Membership, renewal forms for 2020/2021 Membership are forthcoming. Please keep your eyes on the mail and return your check in the envelope provided as soon as possible.

I want to thank everyone for their well wishes and get-well cards following my recent hip replacement surgery. I sincerely appreciate them.

*Sarah*

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## Program Notes

John Heinbokel, Chair, MOS Program Committee  
6 September 2020

Welcome to a new phase in monthly programming for the Maryland Orchid Society. We're done with rolling over and playing dead in the face of the COVID-19 outbreak. We still won't be able to meet in person for a time (current expectation is not until next year, but that is fluid!), but we can 'gather' virtually (virtuously?) to accomplish some of what a 'real' meeting would.

We will meet online (using ZOOM, so be sure you have that app loaded on your computer or phone!) beginning at 7pm on the 17th. There will be a practice ZOOM session the day before, as Clark Riley has described in an email earlier this month. We are planning for the following activities online:

1. Education Corner (beginning at 7 pm): David Smith will moderate that session.
2. MOS Business and Announcements (beginning at 7:30 pm): Among other things, we hope to have a membership quorum so that we can complete the election of new officers that was postponed from June.
3. Presentation (following conclusion of Business and Announcements): Clark Riley will be the guinea pig for our first online presentation; that is described below.
4. Virtual Show Table (following conclusion of the Presentation): We will be sharing photos of our recently blooming plants. Please submit one or two photos of plants to Fay Citerone (Fay.Citerone@gmail.com). Be sure your name and the name of the orchid are clear in your submission. There is no need to indicate a show table class. We will not be judging, but will be compiling participation points for these submissions. We may be able to briefly discuss some aspect of the plant's culture, display, or breeding. Please have your submission(s) to Fay by Wednesday, the 16th, so that she has sufficient time to compile them.



## More on our September presentation and presenter:



### **“Using the Internet to Get the Most Out of Your Orchids”**

The internet is an awesome and usually free resource to help us all grow our orchids better. From purchases of rare species to proper names, from hybrid identities to cultural questions, it's all there. Pictures, habitat shots and descriptions, history, and all. Clark Riley will present a lively overview in an interactive session. Be ready with questions and be ready to be called on for your favorite orchid. The meeting will include a one-page electronic handout with easy references and links to use right away.

# Dr. Mark O. Robbins, a physicist and Johns Hopkins professor, dies

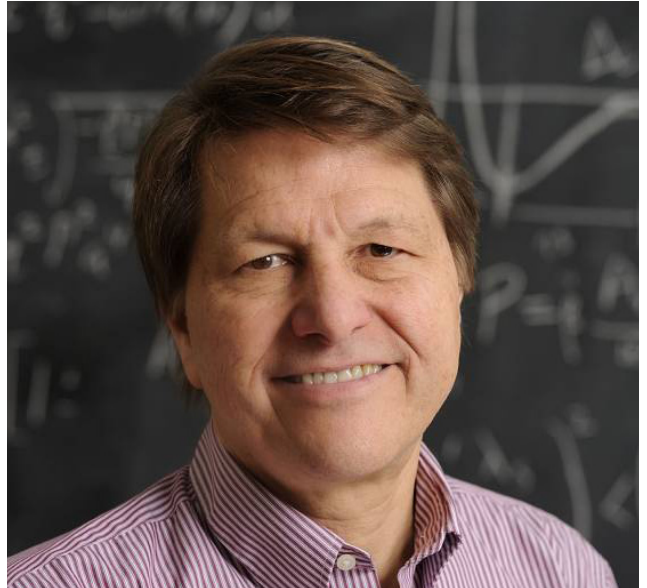
By EDWARD LEE  
BALTIMORE SUN |  
SEP 06, 2020 AT 4:01 PM

When Mark O. Robbins found a hobby that interested him, he immersed himself in it. That may explain how it took him almost 10 years to craft a crib.

While a student at Harvard University, Mr. Robbins visited his roommate's family farm, chopped down a cherry tree, and removed the wood. Nearly 10 years later, he hand-delivered a crib to the roommate.

"He said he wanted it for himself, but he made a beautiful crib, which took years to perfect, and gave it to me when my first daughter was born," said Andrew Strominger, who choked up while remembering his friend's gesture. "There were two or three other pieces, and every one of them was perfect. They were sanded by hand, not by machine. They were perfect and beautiful."

Dr. Robbins, a condensed matter physicist who taught at the Johns Hopkins University's Henry A. Rowland Department of Physics and Astronomy for more than 30 years, died Aug. 13 from a heart attack while exercising at his home in Baltimore. He was 64.



As the associate director of the Institute for Data Intensive Engineering and Science, Dr. Robbins was instrumental in an effort to construct a shared computer cluster and then expand that system.

"Mark was one of a select few who really helped define the field of soft matter physics and set the agenda for the field over the past few decades," fellow professor Robert Leheny wrote via email. "His leadership will be sorely missed. At Johns Hopkins, he also spearheaded the effort to make the university a leader in high performance computing. His passing is a huge loss for the University."

Born in Indianapolis, Indiana, Dr. Robbins was the eldest of five children raised in Newton, Massachusetts, by the former Dorothy Bigelow, a homemaker, and Owen Robbins, a since-retired chief financial officer for Teradyne, a developer of automatic test equipment.

Dr. Robbins enrolled at Harvard, where he met Alan M. Garber.

"Mark and I met the day we both arrived at Harvard as freshmen," Dr. Garber, now provost at Harvard, wrote via email. "I came from a small Midwestern city [Rock Island, Illinois] that seemingly nobody in New England had heard of. He grew up near Harvard and had been a superstar high school student. He made me feel welcome from the moment we met. He was warm, friendly, down-to-earth, and incredibly smart. We became friends immediately and roommates in the years that followed. And it didn't take long to realize that he was even more brilliant, more generous, and more fun-loving than he seemed at first."

Dr. Strominger, director of Harvard's Center for the Fundamental Laws of Nature, who began rooming with Dr. Robbins in his junior year in 1975, called Dr. Robbins "brilliant and talented," adding that his friend "was one of the happiest people I've ever known."

Dr. Robbins managed to find the fun in adversity even in an ill-fated beer-making enterprise.

"We attacked this beer thing and read the books and figured this whole thing out and got the equipment, and the beer was just absolutely horrible," Dr. Strominger said. "And we were stuck with a few cases of this stuff that we had to drink. We dropped that one. We couldn't figure that one out. That was beyond our skill set."

After graduating from Harvard University in 1977 with a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in physics, Dr. Robbins spent a year as a Churchill Fellow at the University of Cambridge in England before earning a doctorate in physics from the University of California, Berkeley in 1983. He then completed a three-year postdoctoral fellowship at Exxon's Corporate Research Science Laboratory in Annandale, New Jersey, before joining Johns Hopkins in 1986.

Dr. Robbins' specialized field of study was non-equilibrium processes such as friction and adhesion, analyzing the atomic origins of macroscopic phenomena like earthquakes and avalanches.

"Among the topics in which Mark made seminal contributions include the physics of friction and adhesion, the mechanics of fracture, and polymers," Dr. Leheny wrote. "Many of the phenomena Mark studied can be described as 'far from equilibrium.' Research into such problems was somewhat outside the mainstream when Mark got started, but the work of early pioneers like Mark showed the rich physics that could be uncovered from the study of such phenomena and helped to make them established areas of physics research. He also understood the experimental side of physics as few theoretical physicists do, which led him to make unique insights."

Dr. Strominger recalled a camping trip to a lake in the High Sierras in 1992 with his wife, three daughters, and Dr. Robbins. Dr. Strominger and Dr. Robbins carried the two youngest girls for the entire six-mile trek, walked back to collect food they had purchased, and hiked back to cook dinner.

"Mark loved it just because it was such an outrageous thing to do, but it was a nice thing for me," he said.

Dr. Robbins' passion for woodworking — which included building a bed that could hold up to 2,000 pounds, a porch roof, and the re-glazing of a set of windows on the family's 100-year-old house — gave way to an interest in orchids, which he adopted from an uncle and which further flourished after a research trip to Brazil in 1987. Dr. Robbins cultivated as many as 500 orchids at one time at his home and in his office in the university's Bloomberg Center and developed new breeds, earning an Award of Merit from the American Orchid Society and naming two of them after his children, Thomas and Catherine.

Dr. McGuigan said growing orchids was an outlet for her husband.

"I think he found them challenging and relaxing," she said. "And he found the people who grew them interesting as well. So by bringing the flowers to shows and meetings, he found the people around him very interesting."

Dr. McGuigan said her husband enjoyed shopping, dancing to disco and swing music, and traveling. But one of his other hobbies, buying and dining on pungent cheeses, proved to be too much at times.

"We'd kick him out of the house sometimes because they were so bad," Dr. McGuigan said with a laugh.

Dr. Robbins was cremated. A memorial service is being planned.

In addition to his wife, Dr. Robbins is survived by one son, Thomas Robbins of Madison, Wisconsin; one daughter, Catherine Robbins of Baltimore; his parents, Owen and Dorothy Robbins of Weston, Massachusetts; three brothers, Bradford Robbins of Mountain View, California, Andrew Robbins of Newton, Massachusetts, and Gregory Robbins of Wellesley, Massachusetts; and one sister, Marion Robbins of Weston, Massachusetts.

# Maryland Orchid Society Officers and Committees

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The MOS meets at the Woodbrook Church, 25 Stevenson Lane, Baltimore, MD 21212, the third Thursday of each month, September through June. The Show Table setup begins at 7:00 p.m. followed by judging at 7:30 p.m. The Education Corner and Library open at 7:15 p.m. The program commences at 8:00 p.m. and adjourns at approximately 9:30 p.m.