

Department of Chemistry

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Catalysts of Curiosity: Undergraduate Experiences that Inspired my Science

Research careers are often a story of how curiosity and opportunity influence the choice of scientific questions to pursue. Though the particulars of how a certain project was inspired may be a convoluted tale, many of us can point to specific moments that define our choices. For me, I recall the first research talk I attended with my thesis honours supervisor Dr. Clive Elson. The talk on fast atom bombardment ionization mass spectrometry mostly went over my head, but I learned enough to be intrigued by mass spectrometry. That year, I also completed a self-directed readings course that allowed me to choose papers based on my interests and work with Dr. Elson to develop an understanding the science. Two of the papers, one on electrospray ionization and the other on capillary electrophoresis, continue to have an influence on my teaching and the types of research carried out in my group. In this talk, I will present some fascinating aspects of our work and discuss connections with interests in analytical instrumentation that were ignited during my undergraduate training.