

In memory of David Leith

January 9, 2020



David Leith, SLAC Professor Emeritus

SLAC Professor Emeritus David W.G.S. Leith, who came to SLAC as an associate professor in 1966, died Jan. 2 at the age of 82 after a brief illness. He founded experimental group B, was associated with several major SLAC experimental programs including the LASS, SLD, BABAR and SuperB experiments, and served as the lab's research director for nearly a decade. You can read more about his work at the lab in the article, "[A Bet that Paid Off for Science: David Leith's 50 Years at SLAC.](#)"

A celebration of his life will be held Sunday, Jan. 12 from 3-5 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 1140 Cowper St., Palo Alto.

David's colleagues are writing a remembrance of his life and career that will be posted on the SLAC Archives, History and Records Office website, along with this [biographical page](#).

Comments

stilespj replied on Tue, 2020/01/14 - 2:32pm

David Leith: a leader with a heart.

I started at SLAC in 1989 as a member of Research Group B. I contributed to SLD CRID and BaBar (worked closely with Jerry Vavra) and other experiments. My first year at SLAC I had trouble getting past my probationary period. David Leith was there for me with criticism. CONSTRUCTIVE AND HELPFUL criticism (unlike what I got from others) that was instrumental in me increasing my worth to SLAC and successfully getting through my probationary period. We always got along even though my work assignments took me out of research. I never forgot his honesty AND kindness and will forever remember David with great warmth in my heart.

jjv replied on Fri, 2020/01/10 - 4:39pm

Comment from Jerry Vavra

I worked in David's group for about 30 years. He was not afraid of difficult projects, such as LASS, SLD CRID, BaBar DIRC or SuperB FDIRC. He gave people responsibility, never micromanaged them, but required that results are successful and that they are written up. Now, being old myself, I can judge people better and can say that David was a great group leader, both from point of view of physics leadership and also considering a human aspect. He always tried to help young people in case of personal difficulty. There are only a few people like him. He will stay in my memory for ever.

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