

**Paul R. Jones Outstanding Paper Award 2021
Vera V. Mainz (1954 -) and Gregory S. Girolami (1956 -)**



Vera V. Mainz, Gregory S. Girolami and Dean F. Martin are the recipients of the 2021 Paul R. Jones Outstanding Paper Award for “St. Elmo Brady (1884-1966). The First African American Chemistry Doctorate Recipient,” *Bull. Hist. Chem.*, **2021**, *46(1)*, 83-107.

Vera V. Mainz is retired from her position as Director of the NMR Laboratory at the School of Chemical Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). She received her B.S. degrees in chemistry and mathematics from Kansas Newman University and her Ph.D. degree from the University of California at Berkeley working with Prof. Richard A. Andersen. She has been Secretary/Treasurer of the ACS Division of the History of Chemistry since 1995.

Gregory S. Girolami is the William H. and Janet G. Lycan Professor of Chemistry at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he has twice served as the Head of the Chemistry Department. He received his B.S. degrees in chemistry and physics summa cum laude from the University of Texas at Austin and his Ph.D. degree from the University of California at Berkeley working with Richard A. Andersen. Thereafter, he was a NATO postdoctoral fellow with Sir Geoffrey Wilkinson at Imperial College of Science and Technology, and joined the Illinois faculty in 1983. His research interests are primarily the synthesis, properties, and reactivity of new inorganic, organometallic, and solid state species. He has published over 280 papers and several books.

During their graduate student years, they developed an interest in chemical genealogy when tracing their own advisor’s professional lineage. They extended that work to the UIUC Chemistry Department, see <http://web-genealogy.scs.illinois.edu/>. They have also co-curated two exhibits at the UIUC Rare Book Room: 1) From Alchemy to Chemistry: Five Hundred Years of

Rare and Interesting Books, <http://rbx-exhibit2000.scs.illinois.edu/>; 2) Crystallography – Defining the Shape of Our Modern World, found online at URL <http://xray-exhibit.scs.illinois.edu/> .

Commentary provided by David E. Lewis, winner of the 1997, 2010, and 2019 Outstanding Paper Awards:

It is only in the last few decades that the contributions of pioneering African American chemists to organic chemistry have been addressed seriously by the chemistry community at large. The honored paper is an important contribution to this area of scholarship. It provides a comprehensive account—as its 169 references attest—of the life and career of St. Elmo Brady, the first African American to earn a Ph.D. in chemistry. The subject of the paper details the career of Dr. Brady, who was instrumental in building the chemistry programs at the graduate and undergraduate levels at four Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Tuskegee University, Howard University, Fisk University and Tougaloo College. The paper gives a very useful summary of the development of higher education for African American students before World War II, and it does an excellent job of highlighting the difficulties faced and overcome by Brady and his colleagues in the Jim Crow era. The context for this commentary is provided by quotations from a variety of sources from the era. This paper is a standout contribution that I enthusiastically recommend to all members of the chemistry community.

BULLETIN FOR THE HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY

Division of the History of Chemistry of the American Chemical Society



VOLUME 46 Number 1

2021



St. Elmo Brady, Ph.D.