Seven years in our Physics Department: 40 years in the trenches.

Good morning, I am Bob Gruebel. My son Ralph and I are so pleased that we can be part of this occasion. I am a High School drop-out who joined the Navy out of boredom when in the 10th grade. I came to UofA after 21 years in the Navy. I arrived and found shipmates here. Glen Clayton, an electronics technician and Bud Zinke; a tin can sailor. Paul Sharrah worked on a torpedo problem at the NRL which was near and dear to me...you can never know the disappointment of fighting through Zero fighters and anti aircraft fire from the cruiser and destroyer screen of a Japanese battleship only to see your torpedo run too deep and pass under the battleship. The depth settings published were hydrostatic and the Bernoulli effect had not been properly accounted for, Paul was part of the final solution; but, on the other hand, we fixed it operationally by setting the depth at that designated and it worked.

Glen Clayton was my research advisor. A great teacher as well as a good friend. We first met at the IGA as my son Ralph struck up a conversation with Beth and Mary Jane Clayton When Glen saw Ralph hitting on his kids he went over and asked who, what, etc. and 5 year old Ralph told Glen that I was a physicist. We met and Glen took one look at this older fella and thought maybe Paul Sharrah had hired a new faculty member.

Dr. Hughes Optics course and Dr. Hobson’s Jackson E & M stand out. Dr. Hughes Optics was concise, lucid and exciting. When I mentioned this to him, he remarked that he wasn’t a good teacher. I must take issue with him... he is an inspiring teacher. I was on a NASA fellowship and since courses cost me nothing, I repeated courses with new faculty. I’d had E&M out of Slater and Frank, then Stratton, and Jackson later with Dr. Hobson. His course was a joy and the satisfaction and sense of accomplishment stayed with me. I also repeated Stat Mech, Solid State, and Quantum and the different faculty perspective was invaluable to me. In fact, David Ross claims that if there had been any way I could have continued for further degrees I would still be at it. He may be right.

In 1968, I joined the Diaspora to Texas. I joined John Decker, MS (UofA) at SFASU. Glen Clayton followed 6 years later as Dean then Graduate Dean. The caliber of service and accomplishment Glen provided has never been equaled. Tom Callaway, Ph.D.(UofA) came a year later. I teach Physics and Art History and I have stayed in the lab and classroom... Students are exciting and a key to my enjoyment of life. At 84 I am often asked: When will you retire? My answer: When I find something more rewarding.

My take on life:

*Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty, well-kept body;*