ARMSTRONG, DR. RICHARD NEIL
Brentwood, TN

Dr. Richard Neil Armstrong, age 66, of Brentwood, died on June 18, 2015, at Vanderbilt Medical Center, after a brief illness.

He was born in Boonville, Missouri, on December 14, 1948, to Ernest Neil Armstrong and Grace Leora Reid. He received a B.S. degree in Chemistry from Western Illinois University, and a Ph.D. degree in Organic Chemistry from Marquette University. He was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Chicago, and a staff fellow at the National Institute of Arthritis, Metabolism, and Digestive Disease, National Institutes of Health, and then joined the Chemistry Department at the University of Maryland. Since 1995, he has been Professor of Biochemistry and Chemistry at Vanderbilt University. Dr. Armstrong also held a Foreign Adjunct Professorship at the Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden. He was Editor-in-Chief for the journal Biochemistry and mentored many Ph.D. students and postdoctoral fellows.

Among his many honors and recognitions, Dr. Armstrong was elected as Fellow of both the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Chemical Society (ACS), and won the ACS Repligen Award and Vanderbilt’s Stanley Cohen Award. He was a 2014 ACS Arthur C. Cope Scholar.

In addition, Dr. Armstrong was the founder and sole instructor of Uncle Ricky’s Fishing School. He was an avid and skilled pie maker, and his dedication to his annual sour cherry crop bordered on the obsessive. An avid, licensed ham radio enthusiast, he enjoyed a parallel identity as KK4MQL.

Dr. Armstrong was preceded in death by his mother and brother Clinton Armstrong. He is survived by his father and by his wife of 31 years, Mary Frances Clark; his children, Kathryn Grace Armstrong and Andrew Clinton Armstrong; his eight brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, along with their out-law spouses, with whom he cheerfully aligned himself; 18 nieces and nephews; and several cousins. He is also survived by many colleagues and close friends.

A memorial service will be held in Benton Chapel, on the Vanderbilt campus, beginning at 1:00pm on Monday, June 22nd and a reception will follow.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to “Vanderbilt Biochemistry – Armstrong Fund” and mailed to: Vanderbilt Gift & Donor Services, PMB 407727, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37240-7727