

Palisades MidAtlantic Winter Newsletter – December 2025

Happy holidays to all our members!

Many thanks to our outgoing treasurer, Stephanie Angelo – we greatly appreciate the essential work she did for our section. Thank you also to Bob Smith for filling in temporarily. We are seeking volunteers for the coming year. If you are interested in joining, please reach out to us at spepalisadesmidatlantic@gmail.com

We plan to open our scholarship application early in 2026 and will send a message and post on our website when the details are ready.

Please see the following thoughts from our chapter president, Mark Lavach:

At this time of year, we are reminded that it is important that we give thanks to the benefits we enjoy both in our personal and professional lives. Professionally, we have all been part of a great industry, one that has brought society a multitude of advances, and one that will hopefully continue to grow and prosper. For many years, the legacy chapters of what makes up the Palisades-MidAtlantic Chapter including the Lehigh Valley Section, the Newark/New Jersey Section, and the Palisades Section have each played a role in developing and educating participants in the industry. Changes in societal norms and the plastics industry have changed the way our Chapter needs to operate. As the page turns, our Chapter will be working on new methods of outreach for its membership. And as always, we can use all the help we can get. But some things, like our focus on education will stay the same.

In the spirit of giving thanks, we have learned that three of our more prominent members, Rich Bradley, Len Krauskopf, and Francis McAndrew, all of whom helped build our Chapter and industry have passed away. Here is information on the three of them and to all three, I would like to say “thank you” one last time.

Rich Bradley

Rich Bradley passed away on October 11, 2025, at the age of 79. No history of the Palisades Section, the Vinyl Division or even the SPE can be written without mentioning Rich. Rich joined the SPE in 1973 as a member of the Palisades Section and Vinyl Division. Over the years he held multiple positions in both chapters including President of the Palisades Section and Chair of the Vinyl Division. Rich was also a member of the Executive Committee of SPE, serving as Vice President from 2002-2005; and elected an Honored Service Member of the Society in 2001. From the Vinyl Division he received the Outstanding Service Award in 2010.

Rich was actively involved in the organization of many VINYLTEC conferences, affectionately earning the title of “Mr. VINYLTEC.” He helped make the conference what it is

today. As a result of the conference success, Rich made significant financial contributions to the endowment funds of both the Vinyl Division and Palisades-MidAtlantic Section. For his contributions to the Society, Rich received the SPE President's Cup in 2010, considered the highest service award in the SPE.

Rich, who held a BS in Marketing from the University of Bridgeport, spent most of his career in sales of PVC Additives starting first at Ross and Roberts before moving to Witco (later becoming Chemtura Chemicals). Rich joined Shawnee Chemical Co. in 2007 with sales responsibilities for PVC resins and Plastic Additives. He retired from full-time employment in March 2017.

For those of us who were fortunate enough to know Rich, the best phrase to describe him was "he was a character one would not forget." Irascible and sarcastic, Rich did everything with great passion and zeal. But behind that gruff exterior was a man who believed in what he did and did it to the best of his abilities. Thank you, Rich, for all you did to help make our organizations a better place.

Len Krauskopf

Len Krauskopf passed away in 2023 at the age of 94. Len, like Allen Godwin and Paul Daniels, were giants of the PVC plasticizer industry developing many of the principles and products that are still used today. While working at Exxon, he authored chapters in both the Wickson Handbook of PVC Formulations, and the 1st edition of the PVC Handbook on PVC plasticizers. Len was responsible for the development of the Krauskopf equation used to predict miscibility of monomeric plasticizers. He was active in the legacy Palisades-New Jersey Section until around 2017, both as a member of our BOD as well as serving as mentor to the Rutgers Student Chapter section (his alma mater). Len received the title of SPE Fellow in 1998.

I enjoyed many conversations with Len about a multitude of topics, not the least of which was about PVC theory. I continue to be amazed by what folks like Lenny did with the tools available to them. I guess you could say it was real experimental science.

Francis McAndrew

We have just learned that Francis McAndrew passed away in 2023 at the age of 94. Francis was a long-time member of the SPE, joining the organization in 1969. A member of the Newark and New Jersey Sections, Francis served as their President, Councilor, and on their Board of Directors. Francis played an instrumental role in helping with the merger of the New Jersey and Palisades Sections, becoming the Palisades-New Jersey Section and later after merger with the Lehigh Valley Section, the Palisades-MidAtlantic Section. He served

with distinction for 5 years as Treasurer. For his contributions to the SPE, Francis received the SPE Honored Service Member Designation in 2009.

Francis graduated from the University of Massachusetts with a BS Degree in Chemistry. Upon graduation he served in the US Army for 2 years in their Chemical Corps working on fuels and lubricants. After leaving the Army, he joined the Celanese Corporation at its Corpus Christi location working on the development of its CELCON polyoxymethylene copolymer. Francis soon transferred to the Celanese R&D center in Summit, NJ where he continued development of new polyacetal products. During the time he also worked on nylon 6/6 and polybutylene terephthalate resins. He received 17 patents during his 42-year career with Celanese and regarded as a world authority on polyacetals having authored numerous articles and book chapters on the topic.

I had the privilege of working with Francis on numerous occasions, first during my term as President of the Palisades-New Jersey Section, and later as Chair of Educational activities. The word I would use to best describe Francis was “exacting” bringing a profound sense of discipline to the financial activities of the Section. Coupled with Steve Duerr and Art Finkle, our Finance Committee proved quite formidable helping to keep the section stay on budget and investments yielding attractive returns. He will be missed.

Because of their contributions to the development of our Chapter, Rich and Francis were honored with named Scholarships which continue being awarded to this day.

In closing, I would like to wish each one of you a Happy Holiday Season, filled with blessings and joy. And we will continue to continue the legacy created by individuals such as Rich Bradley, Len Krauskopf and Francis McAndrew.

Mark Lavach

President – Palisades MidAtlantic Section of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE)

Fellow and Honored Service Member of SPE