

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 8, 2010
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SUBJECT: Rededication of Priestley House Pond Building

The Pond Building rededication ceremony at Joseph Priestley House in Northumberland, PA took place on Sunday November 7, 2010. The building is named for George Gilbert Pond, head of Department of Chemistry at Penn State who in 1919 purchased Priestley Mansion at auction in order to save it as a museum. The newly refurbished Pond building was built in 1926 to serve as a fireproof museum for the papers and equipment of Joseph Priestley apart from the house. It will be used for presentations, displays and meetings.

Speaking at the rededication ceremony was Roy Olofson, Professor Emeritus of Chemistry at Penn State, chair of the committee that raised funds for the renovation of the building. He reviewed the history of the involvement of Penn State and chemists with Priestley House dating back to the 1874 commemoration of the one-hundredth year anniversary of Priestley's discovery of oxygen. Olofson narrated a silent film of the 1926 dedication of the Pond Building that showed visiting chemists from all over the world arriving at the train station in Northumberland. His comments were followed by Joseph Priestley re-enactor, Ron Blatchley's chemistry demonstrations. Among the fifty people attending the event were a Cub Scout pack from Kreamer, PA and undergraduate chemistry students from Penn State, Abington. The chemistry students continued a long tradition of chemists visiting Northumberland by placing red roses on the grave of Joseph Priestley in Riverview cemetery.



Left to Right

Roy Olofson, Professor Emeritus of Chemistry, Penn State University; Ronald Blatchley, Retired Chemistry Teacher and Joseph Priestley Interpreter; Robert Minard, Retired Professor of Origin of Life Chemistry, Penn State University; Tom Bresenhan, President of the Board of Friends of Joseph Priestley House; Stephen Miller, Director of Historic Sites, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; Stuart Stabley, American Chemical Society.



Penn State chemistry students place roses on the grave of Joseph Priestley. (Nov 7, 2010)