

“Death be not Proud”

In Memoriam of Andrew James Alpert

A renowned separation scientist, “Father” of HILIC, founder of PolyLC, talented artist, beloved family man, and CACA executive committee member.



In Memoriam of Andrew James Alpert (1951- 2023)

The sad news came last evening of the unexpected passing of Andy Alpert, whom we just met at the CACA dinner event at Pittcon 2023 Philadelphia on March 20 – happy, engaging, and humorous as always...

I have known Andy for 20 years but confess that most chemists know only one side of Andy, the serious scientist or entrepreneur. I found out more about his other sides this morning by reading his obituary and watching the video of his memorial on May 30. Besides being a renowned scientist, he was a talented artist, linguist (four languages), musician (pianist), sportsman (pole vaulter), chef, naturalist, and above all – a beloved husband, father, brother, and grandfather to five grandchildren. What a unique and multi-faceted person who lived a life of

tireless dedication to his family, church, company, and profession with love, care, humility, and “precision.”

[Andrew James Alpert Obituary - Pikesville, MD | Sol Levinson & Bros.](#) (link)

<https://vimeo.com/831240341/a721731c36?share=copy> (link to the video of his memorial on 5/30/23.)

Andy- The “Father of HILIC” (hydrophilic interaction liquid chromatography)

In the world of chromatography, Andy is most remembered as the scientist who invented HILIC, as described in the 1990 publication in the Journal of Chromatography.

A. J. Alpert, Hydrophilic-interaction chromatography for the separation of peptides, nucleic acids and other polar compounds. J. Chromatogr. A., 499, 1990, 177-186.

[PII: S0021-9673\(00\)96972-3 \(sciencedirectassets.com\)](#) (link to the first HILIC paper)

HILIC solves one of the nagging problems in reversed-phase chromatography (RPC), which has trouble retaining polar analytes which are water-soluble such as sugars, glycans, amino acids, and many secondary metabolites of small molecule drugs. Sometimes I think that even Andy was surprised by the impact of HILIC in biochemical research 30 years later in replacing ion-exchange chromatography because of its mass spectrometer compatibility.

Andy, the exec. Committee member of The Chinese American Chromatography Association (CACA)

Andy and I were long-term members of the executive committee member of CACA, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting science and networking in the separation science community. Andy was the only “non-Chinese” committee member, and his company, PolyLC, was also a corporate sponsor. Andy designed CACA’s logo and is our official event photographer.

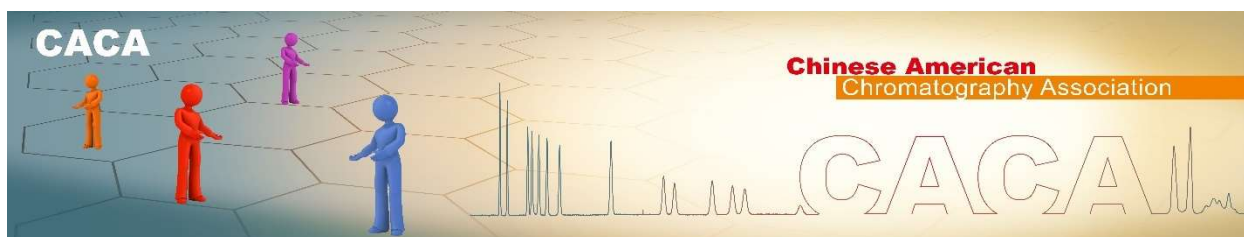


Figure 1. Andy Alpert designed the CACA logo. His talents as an artist and designer are apparent here.

Most of his colleagues saw Andy as the invited speaker at a symposium chaired by Perry Wang at Pittcon 2023 and as a board member guest at the CACA networking dinner on March 20, 2023, at Ocean Harbor in Philadelphia Chinatown.



Figure 2. Andy and other speakers at the invited symposium chaired by Perry Wang (second at left). Photo credit to Perry Wang.



Figure 3 Andy at the CACA networking dinner at the Ocean Harbor in Philadelphia Chinatown, flanked by Mingming Ma (CACA president-elect) and Yi He (CACA president)

“Death Be Not Proud”

*“Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.” By John Donne.*

I was saddened by the news yesterday and pondered how life can be fragile. Andy has moved on, but our memories of him, his humanity, and his love of life will live in our hearts for a long time.

Posted by Michael Dong on June 11, 2023, a fellow chromatographer and member of the CACA executive committee.