

Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Robert Lochhead, Professor of Polymer Science

If you look on the back of your shampoo bottle at home, chances are Dr. Robert Lochhead named some of the ingredients used to make that shampoo. The same is true for many household products used in our daily routines. Dr. Lochhead is on a committee for the International Nomenclature of Cosmetic Ingredients (INCI). His committee selects names for polymers that go into formulations of personal care products. The INCI system has been established since the 1970's by the Personal Care Products Council (formerly known as Cosmetic, Toiletry, and Fragrance Association). Many countries including the United States require manufacturers of cosmetic ingredients to submit all new ingredients for registration through the INCI system.

Lochhead is internationally known for his work in polymers. He is a professor of Polymer Science at the University of Southern Mississippi. Over the years, he has served as interim director, chair director, and dean of the School of Polymers and High Performance Materials. He recently stepped down as director of the School of Polymers though he remains an active subject matter expert and highly regarded faculty researcher.

Lochhead is a great asset to the University and to the world of polymers. In 2012 he was awarded the Chemical Pioneer Award by the American Institute of Chemist (AIC). According to the American Institute of Chemists, the award was first presented in 1966 and recognizes chemists, chemical engineers, or their associates who have made outstanding contributions on advancements in chemical science. Lochhead was deeply honored but completely surprised by this award because he was not a member of the American Institute of Chemist. After winning the Chemical Pioneer Award, the AIC inducted Lochhead as an AIC Fellow. He is a recipient of the Maison G. DeNavarre award; the highest honor in the arts and sciences of cosmetics. In 2013, he received the Education Award from the Society of Plastics Engineers.

Lochhead spent twenty-five years in the industrial field before joining the Southern Miss faculty in 1990. He has authored over 100 scientific papers and holds 19 patents – some are for polymers that are used extensively in household products.