



WILLIAM M. GELBART

Bio: William Gelbart was trained as a theoretical physical chemist in the area of molecular spectroscopy and photophysics (Harvard B.S., 1967, working with William Klemperer; University of Chicago Ph.D., working with Stuart Rice, Karl Freed, and Joshua Jortner) and had the postdoctoral opportunity of working by himself as an NSF-NATO Fellow in Paris (1971) and as a Miller Institute Fellow at Berkeley (1972), during which time he switched to research on the statistical physics of simple fluids near and far from their critical points. He joined the UC Berkeley Chemistry faculty as an Assistant Professor in 1972 and transferred to UCLA as an Associate Professor in 1975, where he was promoted to Professor in 1979, to Distinguished Professor in 1999, and served as Chair of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry from 2001 to 2004. Throughout these years his research centered on complex fluids theory, focusing successively on liquid crystal phase transitions, micellar solutions, thin films, colloidal suspensions, high polymers, and biologically-inspired-physics phenomena. In his 1999-2000 sabbatical year at the Curie Institute in Paris he first learned how simple viruses can be and became “infected” by trying to understand them, which he has been doing ever since. He is an elected Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a recipient of Sloan, Dreyfus, and Guggenheim Fellowships, the Lennard-Jones Medal of the British Royal Society, the “Liquids” Prize of the American Chemical Society, the UCLA Glenn Seaborg Medal and University Distinguished Teaching Award, and numerous endowed lectureships throughout the US and Europe. In 2016 his work was honored by a 70th birthday Symposium hosted by the International Center for Theoretical Physics and by a Festschrift issue of the Journal of Physical Chemistry.