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AP Chemistry period 4

As Sam Wait described his chemistry experiments performed at the age of twelve, the noxious fumes often produced from dangerous chemical combinations in the dim light of his make-shift lab in his basement, his passion for research was exceedingly apparent. It is rare to find a child who would take great pleasure in experimenting in such a capacity and it is a characteristic that is most admirable. Just as Wait's junior high school teacher recognized his interest early on and sought to encourage it, our society should better work to help students pursue learning and experimentation for the love of learning.

Having worked in a lab myself trying to understand if research would become an integral part of my life, I saw that Wait still contained the intense curiosity characterizing the successful scientists I was in contact with. These individuals find nothing more satisfying than making an exciting discovery and contribution to their field. It is important that we look to individuals such as Mr. Wait for inspiration and to understand that being a researcher is much more than a profession.

As a result of this passion, Wait made it clear that it was important to study only an area of research that captivated one's interest. He could not work for industry, though that had initially been his plan, because he would have been forced to study an area that was predetermined and potentially something he would be unable to enjoy. For this reason he did not return to DuPont and he did not accept the job at Westinghouse. From this information, it was obvious that Mr. Wait was involved in science purely for the joy of discovery and was not blinded by factors such as money that attract so many others. Just like the number theory that so fully fascinated Mr. Wait, his specific corner of chemistry was a mystery that he worked most intensely to solve.

The fact that he cares so greatly about his work was illustrated by his careful description of his research. He sought to give an explanation that the audience could understand so that they could appreciate his subject as much as he does himself. Though it has been years since he has been in the laboratory, he still described all that was essential to gain an elementary grasp of the science and certainly enough to understand its relative importance. As he readily answered our questions, it was clear he delighted in intriguing us with his subject.

Teaching is another means Mr. Wait utilizes to help encourage students to become just as excited about chemistry as he is. The more youths who can help advance science the better because, as Mr. Wait pointed out, America is rapidly falling behind other countries. His description of science in England as compared to the United States only helped further his argument. By helping to peak the interest of young people, hopefully our country can become, once again, a great contributor to the scientific community. Our group of interviewers took this statement to heart as many of us are considering whether or not to pursue research as a career.

From this interview I have gained a real sense of the enthusiasm and joy felt by most scientists towards their research. It has inspired me to choose a profession, most likely research or medicine, that affords just as much meaning in my life as chemistry does for Mr. Wait.