Dr. Tavares was born in Providence, RI and received an A.B. from Brown University followed by a M.Sc. and Ph.D. from Yale. After postdoctoral fellowships at the University of Illinois and Duke University, he joined the Chemistry Department at the University of Alberta (Calgary) in 1961. In 1962 he was promoted to Assistant Professor and in 1969 to Associate Professor. From 1967 to 1970 he served as an Assistant Dean (Student Affairs) in the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Dr. Tavares taught organic chemistry for most of his years at the U of C. His research interests spanned organic photochemistry, organic reaction mechanisms and synthesis. In addition to his love of teaching he was also involved in the discipline of chemistry outside the University. He was Secretary of the local section of the Chemical Institute of Canada (CIC) and was elected to Fellowship in CIC in 1979. On campus he was actively involved in student affairs and served for many years on the Student Appeals Committee and as liaison between the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Science. He also served as undergraduate advisor for the CIC and Chemistry/Biochemistry Clubs and participated actively in the Department of Chemistry’s High School Lecture Program, and the High School Enrichment program, including the High School Science Fair. Participation in the running of Convocations, often as a Marshall, was a personal choice but he also considered it an important responsibility.

Failing health and eyesight from a lifelong affliction with diabetes slowed him somewhat in the last few years of his life but did not deter him from participating in student affairs and his quest to add to the pool of scientific knowledge through his own research and that of his graduate students and colleagues. He collaborated in research on desulphurization catalysts with other members of the Department of Chemistry under the sponsorship of the Alberta Oil Sands Technology Research Association which resulted in several patents.

Dr. Tavares was an avid skier and hiker and enjoyed many other outdoor pursuits as well. He meticulously planned, and with the help of family and friends, constructed a geodesic dome on the family’s recreational property.

Dr. Tavares passed away in 1989 and the Dr. Don F. Tavares Teaching Award in Chemistry was established at that time.