

Remembering Herb



Herb Kaesz (1933–2012)

Herb Kaesz was an Associate Editor of *Inorganic Chemistry* for 31 years from 1969 to 2001. Anyone who published in the journal during that time knew Herb. He was the person on whom the Editor, Fred Hawthorne, depended and the go-to

Herb with longtime UCLA colleague and *Inorganic Chemistry* Editor Fred Hawthorne

person when something was needed. He was an organometallic chemist of note who moved from metal carbonyls to the newly developing field of materials chemistry and the vapor deposition of metallic films. Herb was also a friend. On February 26, 2012, Herb passed away after a brief battle with cancer. The shock of Herb's passing is surpassed by the sadness that a friend, an advisor, and a professional colleague is no longer here to talk and interact with.

I first met Herb in 1966 when I was in graduate school and Herb was a young faculty member at University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). Herb hosted me at UCLA for a seminar and showed me around Westwood; it was my first trip to the west coast. We saw each other regularly at American Chemical Society Meetings and Gordon Conferences and traveled together in 1981 from a conference in Rennes, France, on CO₂ chemistry (where Herb showed his acumen in speaking French; he was therefore the unofficial head of the American delegation in making toasts) to an international conference on catalysis in Groningen, The Netherlands.

Published: May 10, 2012

Herb was born in early 1933 in Alexandria, Egypt, to Austrian parents. His family immigrated to the U.S. when he was 7. After receiving his B.A. from New York University, Herb went on to graduate studies at Harvard University, receiving his Ph.D. in 1959 under the mentorship of F. Gordon A. Stone, and joined the UCLA faculty in 1960 as a member of the inorganic division. He retired in 2003 but remained an active emeritus professor until his death.

Herb's early independent research focused on metal carbonyls and hydridometal cluster compounds. At the time Herb joined UCLA in 1960, Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) in Oak Ridge, TN, had just released technetium, an artificially made radioactive element, for civilian use. Herb obtained technetium samples from ORNL and used them to prepare and study technetium carbonyl compounds. The first compound he made at UCLA was $Tc_2(CO)_{10}$, which, as Herb described in the paper reporting the compound, "fills in the last missing member of the manganese sub-group metal carbonyls which had been more elusive to obtain than those of the neighboring groups."

Herb's former student, Zi-Ling (Ben) Xue, who is Ziegler Professor of Chemistry at the University of Tennessee, recalls that

"When I started my first semester at UCLA as a Ph.D. student in Fall 1984, I was uncertain about the area of chemistry I might be interested in. Herb told me about organometallic chemistry, the beauty of metal complexes, the excitement of making new compounds and solving their structures, and their applications in catalysis. It was clear then that I might enjoy the chemistry of transition metals. I was also impressed by Herb's warmth, energy, and sense of humor.

In the later 1980s, Herb turned his attention to the preparation of thin films of metals and alloys. He pioneered pyrolytic and photolytic methods of film deposition for electronic applications. I was his graduate student at the time, and worked on the deposition of Pt, CoGa and PtGa₂ thin films.

Being an immigrant himself, Herb collaborated extensively with scientists around the world. His group had a strong international profile. Herb actively participated in the IUPAC (International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry) and served on the ACS International Activities Committee until recently. Herb and I helped ACS host the visit of first Chinese Chemistry Deans Delegation to the US in 2008."

Herb performed much vital service for the chemistry community. He was Chair of the Inorganic Division of the ACS and Chairman of the IUPAC Commission on the Nomenclature of Inorganic Chemistry (in that role, he was involved in the naming of Seaborgium). In addition, he was president of the Inorganic Syntheses Organization, which publishes the Inorganic Syntheses book series (Herb served as editor of volume 26 in this series), as well as having served as Associate Editor of *Inorganic Chemistry*. Herb was also a key person in helping to foster the early success of the Gordon Research Conference on Organometallic Chemistry.

Herb's accomplishments were honored by the scientific community over the course of his career. In 1980, he received the Tolman Medal from the Southern California Section of the American Chemical Society, and in 1981, he was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In 1988, he received a Senior U.S. Scientist Award from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Germany. In

1998, Herb received the ACS Award for Distinguished Service in the Advancement of Inorganic Chemistry, and in 2009, he was elected a Fellow of the American Chemical Society in recognition of Herb's activities in promoting the science and profession of chemistry and service to the American Chemical Society.

To me, Herb will be remembered for his intellect, optimism, good nature, spirit, and wit. His work for our journal will always be remembered. I note with another touch of sadness that Herb was helped in his work for *Inorganic Chemistry* by his wife Joan, who predeceased him in 2010 and with whom he was married for 51 years.

Richard Eisenberg, Editor-in-Chief