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Professor Stoyko Fakirov A Sixty Fifth Birthday Tribute

It is a pleasure to write a foreword to a volume celebrating the 65th birthday of Prof. Stoyko Fakirov. I first met him in 1966 during a meeting in Berlin (Die Feinstruktur der Hochpolymeren), when he still was working in Moscow with Prof. V. A. Kargin. Our second meeting was twenty years later, at a Conference on Polymer Physics of the East German Physical Society in Leipzig. From the very beginning, I must have sensed the quality of the man, sufficiently to know that I wanted Stoyko Fakirov to come to our laboratory in Madrid to collaborate with us; a goal that was accomplished years later.

Stoyko Fakirov has made important contributions in various fields of Polymer Science notably among others, the discovery of the so-called microfibrillar reinforced composites (MFC). This volume is a celebration of his work with contributions from many of his former colleagues and students. The contributors are all prominent in their particular fields, and a great variety in their contributions illustrates the wide impact Stoyko Fakirov has had in the field of Polymer Materials.

Born on January 19, 1936 in Leshnitsa, Bulgaria, he studied Chemistry at the University of Sofia. After graduation to M.Sc. in 1959 he was appointed Assistant Professor at the same University. Thereafter, in 1962, he went to Moscow to work under Professor V. A. Kargin on the structure and mechanisms of thin film formation from polymer solutions. In 1966 he obtained the doctoral degree at the Lomonosov University. In 1972, he became Associate Professor in Sofia and then moved to the University of Mainz where he spent two years as visiting scientist working with Prof. E. W. Fischer. During the period 1982–83 he visited Professor J. Schultz at the University of Delaware. Since 1984 he is leading a research group on structure and properties of polymers at Sofia. In 1987 he was appointed Full Professor of Chemistry at Sofia University and later on he became Vice-president of this University.

Professor Fakirov is a world-renowned authority in the areas of structure-property relationships in polymers and composite materials, microscopic characterization, preparation techniques for high performance plastics and composites with thermoplastic matrices, design of new classes of composites, reactions in solid state and molten condensation polymers with emphasis on commercial applications, chemical healing of polymers, microhardness of polymers and structure and properties of natural based biomaterials. The extensive work of Professor Fakirov has resulted in more than 250 papers and 9 US patents. Professor Fakirov is an enthusiastic university teacher and researcher who has taught a large number of students. He has been the supervisor of 36 M.Sc. and 12 Ph.D. theses. He also has authored and edited more than ten excellent text-books and monographs.

Prof. Fakirov's international contacts with colleagues all over the world have played an important role during his life. His collaborations spanned from Sofia to many places abroad; the University of Mainz; the University of Delaware; the Bosphorus University at Istanbul, Turkey; the University of Cincinnati; the Institute of Structure of Matter (CSIC), Madrid; the University of Minho, Braga-Guimaraes, Portugal and the University of Kaiserslautern where he is working presently as a visiting Professor.

He is Associate Editor of the International Journal of Polymeric Materials since 1992. He is also member of the editorial board of Materials and Advances in Polymer Technology and of the board of

Applied Composites. Professor Fakirov who is a well respected scientist among his colleagues worldwide, has received a number of awards: the Award of the Union of Bulgarian Scientists, the University of Sofia Honor Award Recently he has received the Humboldt Research Award. He has been, as well, Fellow of several international Institutions: the Ministry of Education of Egypt, Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Japanese Society of Promotion of Science, US Information Agency, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, India; Ministry of Education of Turkey, Ministry of Science and Education of Spain, Foundation of Science and Technology, Portugal.

Stoyko has been an obligatory reference in Polymer Science and Technology with a human input that all of us remember with gratitude. Kindness towards juniors and fairness towards colleagues have been prominent among his attributes, along with constant good temper, good humor and determined courage and good balance in facing difficulties.

Today I take the opportunity to join the rest of contributors to this volume in this salute to him on his 65th birthday, with gratitude for his unflagging friendship.

Francisco J. Baltá Calleja