

Report on the VIII COLACRO Conference*

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The Hotel Crowne Plaza Panamericano was the site of the VIII Latin American Chromatography Conference, which in Spanish is called *VIII Congreso Latinoamericano de Cromatografía y Técnicas Afines*. It was an excellent choice—even a foreigner could find it in the center of Buenos Aires. The location was near Lavalle Avenue (a street in which cars are prohibited), the Obelisk, and across from the Teatro Colon on the other side of 9 de Julio Avenue (Figure 1). Previous COLACRO conferences were held in: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1986); Buenos Aires, Argentina (1988); Águas de São Pedro, Brazil (1990 and 1998); Ciudad de México, Mexico (1992); Concepción, Chile (1994); and Caracas, Venezuela (1996). The Permanent Scientific Committee of COLACRO includes Prof. Carel Cramers (Technical University of Eindhoven, Eindhoven, The Netherlands), Prof. Fernando M. Lancas (Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil), Prof. Harold McNair (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA), and Prof. Pat Sandra (University of Ghent, Ghent, Belgium) (Figures 2 and 4).

The Local Organizing Committee was chaired by Dr. Daniel Escati (Chromatography Division of the Argentine Chemical Society) and performed a perfect job gathering the experts of chromatography from Latin America and other parts of the world (USA, Canada, Europe, and Japan).

Preconference short courses were given on “Advances in LC”, “Advances in GC”, “Advances in CE”, “LC & GC–MS”, “Instrumental HPTLC”, and “Sample Preparation”. The conference actually started on April 11 at 8:00 p.m. with the opening ceremony. A vivid welcome cocktail party was given. Afterwards, Dr. Lancas gave an opening introductory speech in Portunol (a language mixture of both Spanish and Portuguese), but his slides were written in English. Dr. Lancas titled his lecture “COLACRO and the Development of Chromatography in Latin America”. He outlined the history of COLACRO, including the very beginnings when he and Dr. McNair decided to start this series of meetings. Part of the opening ceremony was giving COLACRO awards to scientists working in Latin America and one scientist from abroad. Prof. M. Novotny (Department of Chemistry, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN) was awarded the International COLACRO medal for his outstanding contributions to several fields of chromatography and related separation methods. This year, two scientists from Latin America were given COLACRO medals—Dr. R. Saelzer and Dr. M. Vega (University of Concepción, Concepción, Chile) (Figure 3). They have been highly involved with COLACRO from the very beginning and are very well known in the community of chromatographers in Latin America. The Scientific Committee was unable to differentiate between them. Dr. F. Onuska (National Water Research Institute, Canada) was awarded the special COLACRO plaque for his contributions to COLACRO and the dissemination of Separation Sciences in Latin America (Figure 4).

The program of the Conference included 15 plenary lectures, 9 keynote lectures, 25 technical seminars, and 255 posters that attracted the participants. In addition, 9 roundtable discussions summarized the essence, recent results, and future perspectives



Figure 1. A night view of the Obelisk in Buenos Aires from the top of the Hotel Crowne Plaza Panamericano, the site of the COLACRO conference.



Figure 2. Three members of the Permanent Scientific Committee of COLACRO: Prof. Fernando M. Lancas (left), Prof. Carel Cramers (center), and Prof. Pat Sandra (right).



Figure 3. The 2 Latin American scientists, Dr. R. Saelzer and Dr. M. Vega, receiving their COLACRO awards.

* Held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, April 12–14, 2000.

of certain individual disciplines of Separation Science. This year, 490 participants gathered from several countries. Twenty-two exhibitors representing 55 companies showed their commercially available instruments, chemicals, and accessories.

On April 12 (Wednesday), the opening lecture, "Capillary Electrophoresis of Complex Carbohydrates", was given by Prof. M. Novotny (Figure 5), which was followed by plenary lectures such as "Fast Chromatographic Separations of Enantiomers Using Compressible Mobile Phases" (given by M. Lee, USA), "Utilization and Miniaturization in the New Millennium" (given by N. Guzman, USA), "Optimization of Accelerated Solvent Extraction in Sediment Samples" (given by F. Onuska, Canada), and "Electric Field Mediated Separation of Biopolymers on Microchips" (given by A. Guttman, USA). The roundtable discussions were "Separation of Macromolecules", "Modern Application of TLC", and "LC/MS & CE/MS applications". The first day sessions were completed by keynote lectures, such as "Planar (Thin-Layer) Chromatography" (given by H. Kalász, Hungary), "Análisis por Electroforesis Capilar de Distintos Tipos de Moléculas" (given by A. Pomilo, Argentina), and "Optimizing Capillary LC/MS Peptide Analysis" (given by S. Cohen, USA). Technical seminars were given in 2 time periods. Through the whole day, posters on such topics as "Capillary Electrophoresis", "TLC/HPTLC", and "Pharmaceutical & Cosmetic Analysis" were displayed.

On April 13 (Thursday), several lectures were also given, such as "Capillary LC: What Still Hinders Its Development" (given by F.M. Lancas, Brazil), "Validation of HPLC Methods" (given by B. Esquivel, USA), "Validation of LC/MS in the Pharmaceutical Industry" (given by P. Sandra, Belgium), "New Technologies for the Analytical Separations Lab in the New Millennium" (given by S. Cram, USA), and "Detectores Cromatográficos Basados en Espectrometros de Masas de Tiempo de Vuelo" (given by J. von Helden, Germany). The technical seminars were followed by the 3 roundtable discussions "LC/Methods Validation, GLPs in LC", "Micro LC & CEC: Latest Trends", and "Sample Preparation". The second session of technical seminars was also followed by keynote lectures on "Ion Chromatography at the Turn of the Millennium: Critical Review and Future Trends" (given by S. Segal, USA), "New Stationary Phases for Reverse Phase HPLC" (given by C. Collins, Brazil), and "Phase Selection in Reversed-Phase LC—One size does not fit all" (given by R. Majors, USA). The posters dealt with "LC Columns", "Food/Natural Products", "Biopolymers", "Environmental/Traces", "GC Columns/General", and "LC/GC Environmental".

On April 14 (Friday), the plenary lectures were "Fast Capillary GC" (given by C. Cramers, The Netherlands), "Fast GC and GC/MS for Pesticides in Soil and Natural Products" (given by H. McNair, USA), "Definiciones de Sensibilidad Instrumental en Sistemas GC/MS" (given by H. Gomez, Mexico), "Aplicaciones de la GC al Estudio de la Peroxidación de Lípidos y al Monitoreo de las Actividad Antioxidante in vitro" (given by E. Stashenko, Columbia), and "Recent Innovations in Capillary Column Technology for Speeding Up Trace Analysis Using Ion-Trap Detection in Combination with Rapid MS Columns" (given by J. de Zeeuw, The Netherlands). Technical seminars were followed by 3 roundtable discussions, which were "Recent Advances in GC Column Technologies", "Fast GC & GC/MS", and "Separation of Chiral Compounds". The second session of technical seminars on Thursday was also followed by keynote lectures, such as "Metodos Cromatográficos en el Monitoreo de Contaminantes Atmosféricos" (given by D. van Baer, Chile) and "Aplicaciones Analíticas de MS/MS" (given by H. Gomez,

Mexico). The Friday posters were concerning "GC oil", "Food/Natural Products", "GC—Environmental Traces", and "Columns/General".

The closing ceremony summarized the events of the VIII COLACRO conference, and an announcement indicated the next congress would be held in Cartagena de Indias (Caribbean Sea, Colombia) in 2002. The special guests of the VIII COLACRO conference were invited to a farewell ceremony at *Señor Tango*, a well known tango showplace in Buenos Aires.

My personal impression was that both Dr. McNair and Dr. Lancas kept the control of the conference together with the other members of the International Organizers and the Local Organizing Committee. The organizers arranged an excellent scientific meeting in a friendly atmosphere.



Figure 4. (above) Prof. Harold McNair (left), who is also a member of the Permanent Scientific Committee of COLACRO, is here presenting Dr. F. Onuska (right) his special COLACRO plaque.



Figure 5. (right) Prof. Novotny, who was awarded the International COLACRO medal during the previous night, is here giving the opening lecture of Wednesday's session.