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## Foreword

The 'PREP'96' *International Symposium on Preparative Chromatography and Related Techniques*, organized in Europe, was held from 1–4 September 1996 at the modern and spacious facilities of the Convention Center in Basel, Switzerland. Thirty lectures were presented and 57 posters exhibited. Simultaneously with the scientific program, an exhibition of instruments was organized, giving participants the opportunity to meet 21 of the world's leading suppliers of preparative and industrial separation products and technologies. Several manufacturers organized seminars during the lunch breaks. Fifty-seven percent of the participants were from the industry, twenty-five from the chromatographic suppliers, sixteen from universities or polytechnics, and two from press associations.

The lectures were divided into six sessions focused on (I) innovative processes including electrochromatography, (II) simulated moving bed chromatography, (III) packing media, (IV) theory and simulation, (V) techniques and costs, and (VI) validation, method development, and applications.

In the opening lecture, Dr. Reinhard Ditz (Merck KGaA, Germany) presented a stimulating review questioning the maturation of the preparative separation technologies. This lecture was directly followed by a series of short presentations which demonstrated that the diversification of the preparative chromatographic techniques continues to expand. For example, techniques based on electrochromatography for the large-scale purification of proteins or the innovative separation process known as 'Compact-Disc-HPLC' and consisting of a true-moving-bed chromatography aroused great interest among the participants. The session dedicated to simulated moving bed chromatography was clearly a major event of the symposium. Although this tech-

nology was only recently becoming available on a laboratory scale, it was clear from the lectures and the relevant posters that its acceptance has been exceptionally rapidly established, especially in the industry. Interesting mathematical models for defining optimal operation conditions in SMB were presented, and although most of the SMB applications are still focused on the separation of optical isomers, which are ideal binary mixtures, the possibility of using SMB technology for processing multicomponent feed stocks was also demonstrated. It seems quite certain that the SMB technique has now opened up a new dimension in the field of chemical purification and separation processes and that it will in future offer a real alternative to other manufacturing processes.

Many scientists and manufacturers expressed their great satisfaction about the meeting. The success of the symposium was due not only to the high quality of the scientific contributions, but also to the excellent work accomplished by the Organizing Committee, Robert Appel and Michel Marti (Convention Center, Basel), and Rosemarie Marty (Congress Plus, Basel). Special recognition is due to R. Marty for the admirable manner in which she organized the meeting and handled the details. We are also grateful to the members of the Scientific Committee: Dr. H. Colin, Mr. Jules Dingenen, Dr. Alois Jungbauer, Dr. Joachim N. Kinkel, Prof. Roger-Marc Nicoud, Prof. Michel Perrut, Mr. Domingo Sanchez, Prof. Andreas Seidel-Morgenstern, and Prof. Klaus K. Unger. On behalf of the symposium participants, we expressed special thanks to UOP for the very substantial financial support.

The next *International Symposium on Preparative Chromatography and Related Techniques* will be held in Strasbourg (France) from 2–4 September

1998 under the Chairmanship of Professor Daniel  
Tondeur. *Basel, Switzerland*

**Eric R. Francotte**  
*Symposium Chair*