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Foreword

The *24th International Symposium on High Performance Liquid Phase Separations and Related Techniques*, HPLC 2000, was held in Seattle, WA, USA, 24–30 June 2000. This series started in 1973 and has alternated between the USA and Europe since then. It continues to be the premier annual conference on separation science in the world today. From the counts of attendees, scientific abstracts and vendor exhibits, this was one of the largest meetings ever.

The scientific program kept the halls packed throughout the week. HPLC is not just HPLC anymore. Recent developments in biotechnology, clinical diagnosis, miniaturization, new materials, validation, hyphenation and applications dominated the program. These ''related techniques'' will be the seeds for expansion of the field in this new millennium. Seattle happens to be at the center of many of these developments, and fortuitously became the ideal place to hold this meeting.

The conference was preceded by two half-day and two full-day workshops. These were designed to introduce newcomers to the field to various topics before the main technical sessions. Also offered was a short course on capillary electrophoresis for true novices. A number of vendor seminars were also held during the week to allow users of the techniques to get valuable expert advice.

The symposium began with three world-renowned scientists presenting advances in a variety of emerging fields. Dr. Charles Cantor, Professor at Boston University and a key scientist at Sequenom in San Diego, CA, USA, explained how high-throughput screening of diseases could be achieved with mass spectrometry. Dr. Klaus Mosbach, Professor at Lund University in Sweden, gave his perspective on molecular imprinting and chromatographic selectivity. Dr. Egil Jellum, Professor at the Institute of Clinical Biochemistry in Oslo, Norway, showed that separation science continued to be a critical component of numerous clinical investigations.

The oral sessions were organized into topics spanning fundamental concepts to unique applications. These were New directions in capillary electrophoresis/micellar electrokinetic chromatography/isotachophoresis, Method development and validation, Pharmaceutical and combinatorial analysis, New directions in HPLC, Advances in electrochromatography, Miniaturized techniques/microfabrication and chip technology, Fundamental concepts and retention mechanisms, New developments and advances in separation science technology, Hyphenated and multidimensional techniques, Analytical biotechnology, Genomics and proteomics, Chiral recognition and separation of stereoisomers, Sample manipulation and purification, Characterization of column materials and column technology, Preparative and process techniques, Detection schemes and instrumentation, and Novel applications. There was certainly something being presented at any one time that would interest each attendee. In fact, attendees found it difficult to choose among the many exciting presentations. Three oral sessions were held open to accommodate late-breaking results.

The posters were the heart of the conference. Separate sessions were scheduled each day from Tuesday to Thursday. This was where one-to-one interactions flourished. Interleaved among the exhibits, the posters got plenty of exposure during coffee breaks in addition to the scheduled 3-hour slots in mid-day.

The symposium closed with three forward-looking

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lectures. Professor Barry Karger of Northeastern University gave us a glimpse of the future of separation science. Professor Andreas Manz of the Imperial College of London discussed new directions for instrumentation. Professor Ruedi Aebersold of the University of Washington covered the emerging areas of applications for the field, particularly in genomics and proteomics.

The high level of science at the conference was supplemented by the many local attractions. June is the dryest time of the year in the Northwest, and was the ideal time for hiking around the major national parks in the area. Seattle is also a compact city, with the famous waterfront within walking distance from the convention center. The exceptionally good weather we had during the week left everyone with good memories. Some were even asking when the symposium series would be held in Seattle again.

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