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PROFESSOR TAKEO SAEGUSA IS AWARDED MARK MEDAL

On the occasion of Professor Takeo Saegusa's receiving the Herman F. Mark Medal from the Austrian Institute of Science and Research, it is appropriate to review his accomplishments.

For over 30 years Professor Saegusa and I have been involved in science and science politics. We have enjoyed a close personal relationship, as have our families. Professor Saegusa and I have been involved in the progress of polymer science, sometimes as competitors, when we were involved in the initial invention of the polymerization of higher aldehydes, sometimes in close collaboration as in the case of the polymerization of cyclic ethers, especially epoxides. Saegusa and I have organized and conducted seminars, symposia, and large conferences. We have worked together in founding organizations, such as the Pacific Polymer Federation. Consequently, it is with special joy that I am introducing Professor Saegusa at today's occasion of his receiving the Herman F. Mark Medal.

Takeo Saegusa—Professor at Kyoto University, one of the most prestigious institutions in Japan today—is well known in the scientific world; he is always in demand as a scientist and is highly respected for his exceptional personality.

Born in China, the former Manchuria, Professor Saegusa was raised and educated in Japan. He has traveled, lectured, and consulted extensively worldwide in polymer science, catalysis, and organic chemistry; he has also spent several months in the United States as a guest professor.

As chairman of the IUPAC Division of Macromolecular Chemistry, Saegusa was for many years at the Center of Scientific politics for Macromolecular Chemistry.

These examples show Saegusa as scientist, teacher, and scientific politician; he is a personality well known for his keen wit and excellent sense of humor.



Austrian Federal Minister of Science and Research Dr. Erhard Busek



"Laudatio"



Panel Discussion

This sketchy summary would normally suffice to introduce Takeo Saegusa to any audience, but today, on the occasion of the presentation of the Herman Mark Medal, I would like to introduce Takeo Saegusa in a little more detail.

Takeo Saegusa was born in 1927, the second year of the Showa era (Emperor Hirohito's reign) in Senyan, China. He studied first in a preparatory school in Kumamoto, Kyushu, the southernmost of the main islands of Japan, and then at the famous Kyoto University. Saegusa's dissertation was under the direction of Professor Junji Furukawa, the leading scientist in polymer synthesis of his generation, in Japan. After receiving his Ph.D. degree in 1956, Saegusa was offered the position of Assistant Professor in Professor Furukawa's "koza" (research group) and he became Associate Professor in 1962. By 1965, at the age of only 37, he received a call from Kyoto University to fill the position of Full Professor for the Chair of Catalysis and Polymerization at the Department of Synthetic Chemistry of Kyoto University, a position he still holds today.

In the 37 years of his very busy scientific activities since entering graduate school, Saegusa has been active in polymer science, catalysis, and organic chemistry. In the field of polymer science, he has published over 300 papers, as well as over 200 papers in synthetic organic chemistry (together over 500 papers!). He contributed decisively and on a broad basis to the progress of each of the fields. In organic chemistry he has been mainly involved with the development of new synthetic reactions with metal complexes. His important contributions in polymer chemistry were in aldehyde polymerization, ionic, and, especially, cationic polymerization of cyclic ethers and other heterocyclic nitrogen and phosphorus ring compounds. He also studied polymerizations via Zwitterion mechanisms. Special emphasis in Saegusa's work was the study of the kinetics of polymerization reactions and their mechanisms as well as the function of catalysts and initiators.

Professor Saegusa has been honored on several occasions during his career for his exceptional scientific contributions. Especially mentioned should be the Prize of the Japanese Chemical Society in 1978, the Prize of the Society of Polymer Science in 1989, and, most recently, the Exner Medal of the Austrian Trade Association.

Saegusa is also well known as a teacher and lecturer, especially in Japan. He has been a guest professor in over a dozen universities.

As an international scientist, Saegusa was and is highly in demand as a main and plenary lecturer at International Symposia, especially those

sponsored by IUPAC: from Aberdeen, Scotland, to Merseburg, Germany, from Boston, U.S.A., to Montreal, Canada, and from Melbourne, Australia, to Sofia, Bulgaria, he has lectured on the newest developments in polymer science.

For many years, Takeo Saegusa has contributed to the progress of the sciences in Japan. He was a member of the Council of Kyoto University from 1982 to 1985 and a Member of the Scientific Council of Japan from 1985 to 1989. (This appointment is made by the Prime Minister.) Takeo Saegusa was President of the Society of Polymer Science of Japan (which has 11,000 members) from 1984 to 1986; he was Chairman of the IUPAC Division of Macromolecular Chemistry from 1985 to 1989; and he is former Vice President and, since Jan. 1, 1991 President, of the Pacific Polymer Federation.

Takeo Saegusa has also been a major factor in the publication of polymer science. As an Editor and a Coeditor, Takeo Saegusa is active in seven journals and has been involved in the publication and the direction of publication in polymer science in Japan and abroad. He is recognized as one of the most outstanding scientists, teachers, and writers in polymer science.

Today we have also with us Saegusa's charming wife, Ayako, who has accompanied him with patience and dedication in his life and who has supported him throughout his career.

Finally, I would like to make a personal comment. Professor Saegusa and his family have been associated with Vienna for many years. It was here that their daughter, Yumiko, studied piano for several years with Badura-Skoda; Yumiko is now an acknowledged pianist and teacher in Japan.

Kyoto and Vienna have much in common; they have been the capitals of large empires for several hundred years. Kyoto was for 1000 years the capital of the Japanese Empire and the cultural center of Japan. I am particularly happy that Vienna is honoring this outstanding Japanese scientist from Kyoto today with the presentation of the Herman Mark Medal.

It is for me a great pleasure and honor to congratulate you, my friend Takeo Saegusa, with the warmest wishes for this high honor. I wish you continued success in the sciences and for you and your wife, Ayako, much happiness and continued good health in your personal life.

Otto Vogl
October 1990