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PROFESSOR BENGT RÅNBY IS AWARDED MARK MEDAL

This year Professor Bengt Rånby has been elected to receive the Herman F. Mark Medal from the Austrian Institute of Science and Research. It is my honor and privilege to review his accomplishments.

For over 50 years Professor Rånby has been involved in science, and for many years he was involved in what I would call science politics. I have known Bengt for about 30 years during which I have enjoyed a close personal relationship with him. Professor Rånby and I have been involved in furthering the progress of polymer science, sometimes in close collaboration. We have collaborated in photografting and in the development of polymerizable UV stabilizers. Bengt and I have organized and conducted seminars and symposia. We have worked together in the dissemination of knowledge in polymer science and technology, and especially in the development of polymer science in Scandinavia. I was privileged to play a part in the vigorous development of the polymer science program which Bengt initiated at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm where he pursued his activities for the past 25 years as the head of the department. Consequently, it is a special personal pleasure to be able to introduce Professor Rånby at today's occasion of his receiving the Herman F. Mark Medal.

Bengt Gustav Rånby—Professor Emeritus Royal Institute of Technology, one of the most prestigious Institutes of learning and scientific research in Scandinavia and in the world today—was born in Niemisel, Ranea, in Sweden on April 5, 1920. Professor Rånby was raised and educated in Sweden, receiving his Baccalaureate in Lund in 1938. He then studied at the world-famous University of Uppsala, Sweden, receiving the BSc., the M.S. in 1945, and the Ph.D. with the famous Professor and Nobel Laureate, The Svedberg in 1952. His thesis was on "Fine Structure and Reactions of Native Cellulose." He was shortly thereafter appointed "Dozent" and University Lecturer in Physical Chemistry from 1952–1955 in Uppsala. While he was still a member of the teaching staff of Uppsala University, he spent 1 year in Brooklyn in the U.S. at the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, where he worked with the legendary Professor Mark.

After his return to Sweden, he returned again to the United States and took employment at the American Viscose Corporation in Marcus Hook, PA. After 2 years he accepted a position as Professor of Pulp and Paper Technology at the State University of New York and as Director of the Empire State Paper Research Institute, in Syracuse, NY. During this period of his career he spent 5 years in the United States.



Presentation of the Herman F. Mark Medal to Prof. B. Rånby (left) by Dr. Erich Witt (center) and Vice Chancellor Erhard Busek (right).

In 1961 he received a call from the Royal Institute of Technology and accepted the position of Professor, a position he held for 25 years until his retirement in 1986. For a 4-year period he was also the Dean of the School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering.

Rånby had a tremendous impact on polymer science worldwide and especially



Prof. Otto Vogl.



Left to right: Prof. A.-C. Albertsson, the Swedish Ambassador to Austria,
and Prof. Otto Vogl.

on polymer science in Scandinavia. Although a Nobel prize was awarded to Svedberg for the development of the ultracentrifuge, the prize was for physical chemistry, polymer science was then not an established and separately recognized discipline. It was left to his student Rånby to establish Stockholm and the Department of Polymer Technology as an institution of learning in polymer science that is among the elite in the field in the world.

Rånby achieved this recognition because of his personal scientific competence, his leadership in science, and his exceptional personality. He has traveled, lectured, and consulted extensively worldwide in polymer science, catalysis, and organic chemistry.

Over the years Bengt Rånby was asked to teach in many scientific institutions.



Lecturers at the XI. International Herman F. Mark Symposium.

He was a visitor at a number of universities – at North Carolina State University, the University of Massachusetts in the U.S., the Universities of Kyoto and Hokkaido in Japan, and the University of Science and Technology of Hefei in China.

Many honors have been bestowed on him: Honorary doctoral degrees from the University of Helsinki, Finland, and the University of Wraclav, Poland; the Cellulose Award of the American Chemical Society; and the Great Prize of the Royal Institute of Technology just last year.

Bengt Rånby is a Member of the Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences, Uppsala; the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences, Stockholm; and the Finnish Academy of Sciences. Since 1985 Professor Rånby has been a Member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, and he is now a member of their Executive Board.

Rånby's research reaches many fields, and he has contributed in all the areas that he studied fundamentally and with great success. His work in cellulose, starch, and synthetic polymer chemistry using electron microscopy, x-ray diffraction electron spin resonance, and photochemical methods is considered a classical contribu-



The panel discussion. Left to right: Klaus Hummel, Bengt Rånby, Otto Vogl, Ferenc Tüdös, and Manfred Rätzsch.

tion to worldwide science. He has published almost 400 papers in scientific journals and is on the Editorial Board of a number of those journals.

In Scandinavia, Bengt Rånby was and is sought as a consultant, advisor, and collaborator by Industry and Government. For many years he was on the Board of the Scandinavian Paint Institute and on the Advisory Board of several organizations. He was the founder of the Swedish Polymer Society in 1984, and was its president for nearly 10 years.

These examples show Rånby as the scientist, teacher, lecturer, and scientific politician; he is an exceptional personality well known for his keen wit, excellent sense of humor, and gentle manner; he is always in demand as a scientist. As an international scientist, Rånby was and is active as a main and plenary lecturer at international symposia.

Bengt Rånby has been married since 1945 to Aina Ingeborg Charlotta Hultzkrantz; they have 3 children.

I am particularly happy that Vienna and the Austrian Plastics Institute is honoring this outstanding Swedish scientist with the presentation of the Herman F. Mark Medal.

It is for me a great pleasure and honor to congratulate you, Bengt, with the warmest wishes for this high honor. I wish you continued success in science and for you and your wife, Aina, much happiness and continued good health in your personal life. *Ad multos annos.*

Otto Vogl
October 1992