

Photochemists' Festschrift

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Preface

Light plays a critical role not only in the generation but also in the sustenance of life on this planet. This fact has been recognized by human beings since antiquity. There is no doubt that, as long as there is light, there will be photoprocesses. But, intelligent use of this ever-present light in our daily life depends on our ability to establish the ground rules of the processes triggered by light. Recognizing this, orderly investigations of the connections between the absorption of light by matter and its chemical and physical consequences were begun in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This ultimately resulted in our ability to manipulate light to our advantage in areas such as photomedicine, photography, and photolithography.

The 1960s marked a renaissance in photochemistry. During the 1960s many new photoreactions were discovered or rediscovered and mechanisms for many of these reactions were formulated. Several research groups were actively working in this area, including that of George Hammond at the California Institute of Technology. Hammond had a highly productive group which included a number of young scientists that went on to establish research programs in photochemistry at universities around the world. Among this group of young investigators were Bob Liu, Jack Saltiel, Nick Turro, Peter Wagner, and David Whitten. In addition, Hammond served as an influential force in the career of Doug Neckers, who also began his academic career during this period. Over the years, a large number of budding scientists were trained in the labs of these photochemists. The year 1998 marks the 60th year on this sun-saturated planet for each of the six young photochemists. Those of us who have passed through their laboratories wished to gather together this special issue as a means of expressing our

gratitude for their inspiration and encouragement and to acknowledge their accomplishments.

This issue of *The Journal of Physical Chemistry* represents a celebration of the photochemical sciences. The articles collected herein represent contributions from former students, close associates, and others wishing to recognize the careers of the six photochemists. Subjects addressed span a broad range which includes small molecule photochemistry, photobiology, polymer photochemistry, photoreactions in restricted environments, photochemical kinetics, and a variety of related topics. The breadth of the contributions serves to illustrate the tremendous growth of the photochemical sciences over the past 30 years. The issue includes a personal perspective of George Hammond and brief biographical sketches of the six photochemists being recognized.

The guest editors for this issue would like to offer their sincere thanks to all those who contributed articles. The support for this endeavor has been tremendous; in fact, more articles were submitted than could be accommodated in a single issue of the journal. We would also like to express our gratitude to George Hammond for his thoughtful introductory comments and to those who took the time to write the biographical sketches. Thanks are also due to Mostafa El Sayed, who wholeheartedly embraced the idea of the special issue and showed us the way to keep the project on schedule.

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Guest Editors