

Keith Oldham: a tribute on the occasion of his 80th birthday

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February 4, 2009 marks the occasion of Keith Oldham's 80th birthday. This is an occasion of great celebration for Keith and his family. I am delighted that the Journal of Solid State Electrochemistry can also participate in the festivities by publication of a special issue containing electrochemical research articles by Keith and his many colleagues and friends who continue to be inspired by his seminal contributions to the discipline. In addition to authors who have included greetings as part of the publication, I also received many requests to pass on birthday greetings and best wishes in correspondence I had with other electrochemists who were unable to provide a formal scientific contribution to this journal issue.

Over a decade ago, Johna Leddy, Bob Osteryoung, and I had the great honor to prepare an editorial (J. Electroanal.

Chem. 439 (1997) vii to xiv) to mark the occasion of Keith's formal retirement from his position as Professor of Chemistry at Trent University in Canada. None of us at that time thought Keith would fade away upon retirement; he was still very actively pursuing new ideas in electrochemistry in his dedicated manner. That editorial provides a detailed overview of his scientific career at that time and includes full details of his approximately 160 peer-reviewed publications that he had authored or co-authored over the period 1953 to 1997. What we could probably not have predicted, is that his career total of publications would have expanded by about an additional 60 by the time of his 80th birthday. If that is not enough of an achievement, in the same period, Keith has also contributed to several new books. He has published his extraordinarily valuable second edition of "An Atlas of Functions" with Jan Mayland and Jerome Spanier.

Included with the Atlas, and also available separately, is "Equator, a Function Calculator": This unique software allows the calculation of exact values of over 200 mathematical functions. Keith's classic book with Jerome Spanier on "The Fractional Calculus" has been reprinted. Moreover, I am helping Jan and Keith with a second edition of "Fundamentals of Electrochemical Science". Can the newly emerging generation of electrochemists keep up this pace at both the quality and quantity achieved by Keith Oldham since his "retirement"?

The advent of Keith Oldham's scientific career, was formally recognized with his BSc degree in 1949, followed by completion of his PhD degree in 1952 under the supervision of the eminent physical chemist, Noel Hush. In 2009, and some 60 years on from the occasion of the award of his BSc degree from the University of Manchester in the UK, the electrochemical community can with considerable joy now celebrate 60 years of continuously

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outstanding creativity in scientific research. The initial almost 50 years of achievement in electrochemistry was summarized in some detail by the authors of the 1997 editorial referred to above. On that occasion, it was noted, but not emphasized, that Keith also made substantial fundamental contributions to mathematics. On the present occasion, it is with great delight that I can report that the first paper in the 80th birthday issue specifically provides an authoritative account of his contributions to applied mathematics, as prepared by his colleague and friend of many years standing, Jerome Spanier. I trust this report will be of significant interest to the community of electrochemists who may not be fully aware of Keith Oldham's high standing in the field of mathematics. The research

papers that follow in this 80th birthday issue contain reports of studies encompassing theoretical and applied contributions to electrochemical science. It is with great delight that I report that one of these is written by Keith himself and that the others have come from colleagues and friends who have in their various ways benefitted substantially from personal and scientific contact with him.

Keith, on February 4, 2009, your friends and colleagues from the fields of chemistry and mathematics are thrilled to be able to help celebrate the occasion of your 80th birthday, some of us via participating with you in publication of this special volume of the Journal of Solid State Electrochemistry. We now all look forward to being inspired by your contributions to science for many more years to come.