

Commentary

The End of the Beginning; Now Let's Make a Real Effort!



Christopher C. Berndt

On May 14, 2007 I was honored by being presented with the TSS Hall of Fame Award. I was asked to make an acceptance speech that was limited to “less than several minutes.” I thought long and hard about an appropriate message that would not be self-serving, that would envision a future, and that would not dwell on the past. This was a challenging task; here is the text of my minute on the stage.

Colleagues and Friends:

I am honored to receive this award. I am grateful that the efforts of my students and thermal spray collaborators have been acknowledged.

I am the second person from the Southern Hemisphere to be so honored, and I am proud to say that the first person was my Ph.D. advisor.

I would like to leave you with three points:

- Thermal spray science and engineering provides all of us with a good life: a life that is exciting and fulfilling and of many dimensions.
- Thermal spray has come out of the closet and been recognized. We all need to rejoice in its rediscovered identity.
- The future of TS is held in the hands of all of us. We must all rise to this challenge and reap the rewards that we create.

Thank you.

And that was the end of my one-minute speech.

At a deep, personal level, it is humbling to receive unsolicited peer recognition. It came as a pleasant surprise to be invited to join a group of distinguished thermal spray luminaries. From an Australian cultural perspective, it seems somewhat peculiar to be rewarded for what I have enjoyed most; that is “Participation in the world of thermal spray is a reward within its own right.” However, I temper this purist approach with the bona fide happiness and celebration in being acknowledged by the thermal spray community. Thanks!

So ... what was I really trying to say and what was the subtext of my acceptance message? Here comes a longer and more conversational version of my HoF one-minute speech.

In my particular case, I give thanks to a rigorous applied science education that paved the way to undertaking research and development in an engineering technology field. It would be negligent for me not to mention Stony Brook University, New York; where I grew under the tutelage of many colleagues. I am grateful for these opportunities.

Any individual award or honor relies on a team of people who all make important contributions. In my case I have had “a bunch” of students and Post-Doctoral Fellows who have challenged me as much as I have challenged them! They have all been demanding in some form or fashion, just as I have been of them with strange ideas and theories that they have tested. This mutual interaction has been a satisfying part of my professional and personal life. Students have turned into colleagues and become lifelong friends.

Then, in the last 30 seconds of my speech I talk about thermal spray; that is, it is exciting, it has a distinct identity, and it is has a future that is worthy of effort and resources. Thus, TS is not about the present and the capabilities of individuals, but it is about a healthy future that relies on new people stepping up and making contributions.

Consequently, we arrive at the title of this short commentary; “The End of the Beginning; Now Let's Make a Real Effort!” The prime message is that there is ample scope for major contributions to thermal spray from individuals. On the basis of prior knowledge and understanding, as imparted during an ITSC for example, we progress in a systematic fashion further up the evolutionary tree of science.

I urge everyone to contribute to thermal spray: you will not be disappointed!

Christopher C. Berndt, Ph.D., HoF, FASM, FIMMM, FIEAust, CPEng, CEng, CSci
Prof. of Surface and Interface Engineering
Department of Surface and Interface Engineering
James Cook University
Townsville, Queensland, Australia
Contact e-mail: christopher.berndt@jcu.edu.au
The Thermal Spray Society; President, 2002–2004
ASM International; Board of Trustees, 2005–2008
Editor: *International Thermal Spray and Surface Engineering*
Editor Emeritus: *The Journal of Thermal Spray Technology*
Stony Brook University; Adjunct Professor, NY