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OBITUARY

Minoru Tsutsui 1918–1981

Associate Editor, Journal of Coordination Chemistry, 1971–81

On March 10, 1981 Professor Minoru Tsutsui died suddenly and unexpectedly of a heart attack. He was born on March 31, 1918, in Wakayama City, Japan, and received most of his formal education in his native country, completing the Bachelor of Arts degree in Chemistry at Gifu University, and the Master of Arts in Organic Chemistry at the University of Tokyo, where he carried on further graduate work equivalent to the Ph.D. in plant chemistry. He came to the United States in 1951, initially for a three month summer research appointment at MIT with Professor John D. Roberts, but stayed to carry on graduate work with Professor Harold H. Zeiss at Yale University, where he received a Master's degree in 1953 and the Ph.D. degree in 1954. Later, in 1960, he received the D.Sc. degree from Nagoya University, Japan, in recognition of his research accomplishments.

From 1954–56 Dr. Tsutsui was employed as a Research Fellow at the Sloan-Kettering Institute, where he met his wife Ethel. He and Ethel were married in 1956 and very recently celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. It was at that time, after a visit to Japan, that he decided to pursue his career in America. After three years, 1957–60, of industrial research at Monsanto Chemical Company in Dayton, Ohio, he began academic work at New York University, rising through the ranks as Research Scientist, Project Director, Lecturer, Associate Professor, and Professor. He came to College Station as Professor of Chemistry in 1968, and has made his major scientific and professional contributions as a member of the faculty of Texas A & M university over the past 13 years.

Among Dr. Tsutsui's coworkers at Texas A & M there were nearly 50 post-doctorals and about 20 graduate students, who have together co-authored a total of 155 publications. Although his research covered many aspects of organometallic chemistry, his main contributions were in the specialized areas of "sandwich type" metal pi complexes of benzene, rearrangement of transition metal-carbon bonds, metal complexes of aromatic macrocyclic ligands of unusual structure, and homogeneous catalysis of reactions of organometallic compounds. In 1966 he received the A. Cressy Morrison Award for his early contributions to organometallic chemistry.

Professor Tsutsui also published 30 articles on science policy and on the interpretation of science for laymen and science administrators. In addition to these articles and his research papers, he has authored 20 books and chapters in books, and has edited or co-edited 15 advanced monographs and proceedings of scientific meetings. This high productivity takes on even greater significance if it is remembered that nearly all of it occurred during his academic appointments over the last twenty years.

Minoru Tsutsui received worldwide recognition for his scientific contributions. These include an honorary lifetime fellowship of the New York Academy of Sciences, honorary fellow of the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences, and an honorary research professorship of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. He

has held 10 visiting professorships, nearly all of them abroad. He has also been chairman of 8 scientific society organizations, was chairman of 15 scientific meetings and symposia held in the United States and abroad, and has held many appointments as editor or consulting editor for chemical journals and for series of monographs on advanced research topics.

During the Second World War, when Dr. Tsutsui was a Captain in the Japanese Navy, and later as director of a chemical research group attempting to make substitute aviation fuels, he saw first hand what the ravages of war can do to a country and its people. He was especially strongly affected by the cataclysmic events at Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and resolved at that time to use his scientific background to do what he could toward promotion of understanding among nations and their people. His love of organometallic chemistry and his deep concern for the future of mankind led to his outstanding accomplishments in encouraging international cooperation in science. He was quick to realize that the language of science observes no national boundaries, and thus serves as an effective starting point for achieving understanding between people of different religions, ethnic backgrounds, and political persuasions. In addition to frequent visits to Japan and several to the USSR, he was among the first American scientists to assist in opening up the increasing interaction between the United States and the People's Republic of China. He has made two extended visits to China, in order to plan and help carry through the Three Nation Seminar on Organometallic Chemistry, between the United States, Japan, and China, held in June of 1980. As an Honorary Research Professor of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, he was planning to return to China this year, for scientific exchanges and to help set up a new Institute of Synthetic Chemistry in Shanghai.

Professor Tsutsui was a very complex person, with characteristics derived from his Japanese background,

but with many features that are naturally American. He was a private person, and kept his concerns and frustrations very much to himself. He was outwardly calm, cheerful, and always friendly. Hidden beneath his calm exterior was an intense purpose and drive toward making significant contributions to science and the world in general. It is this characteristic that led him to speak up about science policy and the necessity for federal research support, at a time of critical need and when most other scientists were much too silent.

Dr. Tsutsui was devoted to his wife Ethel, and was proud of her professional achievements. He was an excellent father, enjoyed the companionship of his son William, and had high aspirations for his future. Although chemistry was nearly his whole life, he liked to relax with his family, and enjoyed with them several simple pleasures, such as bowling, fishing, and baseball.

Minoru Tsutsui had always experienced trouble with the English language. In lectures and at meetings he had a disarming way of poking fun at himself, both with respect to his imperfect English and his naiveté about American ways and customs. In this manner he easily won over the confidence, friendship and cooperation of a wide spectrum of people including industrial chemists, his academic peers, and foreign scientists. It was this knack for bringing people together and developing cooperation – whether it be for the organization of an international scientific meeting or the consideration of a critical science policy question – that made him unique among the scientists that I have known. Minoru Tsutsui was one of a kind. He will never be replaced, and we shall always remember him for the rare combination of talents that were the basis for his outstanding contributions to the development of science and international scientific cooperation.

April 7, 1981

A. E. Martell
College Station