

A tribute to Professor Rees Rawlings

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Rees Rawlings was one of the many talented undergraduates who read Metallurgy at Imperial College in the 1960s, when the Department was experiencing one of its halcyon periods under the leadership of Professor Geoffrey Ball. Graduating in 1964 with a First Class Honours degree, Rees proceeded to a PhD, but remarkably, was appointed to a Lectureship in the Department of Metallurgy in 1966, before completing his thesis, on the basis of his outstanding promise. This proved a far-sighted decision, as from that time until the present, Rees has served the Department (now of Materials) and the College with distinction, progressing from Lecturer to Reader, and then to Professor of Materials Science, while as Dean of the Royal School of Mines and, since 1999, as Pro Provost, he has also performed formidable administration roles.

As a Materials Scientist, Rees has made insightful contributions to an understanding of structure–property

relationships for various classes of materials—intermetallic compounds, functionally graded systems, composites, ceramics and glass ceramics, with numerous highly regarded journal publications and international conference presentations. His work has been recognised by awards including a DSc from the University of London and the Pfeil Medal from the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining, of which he is also a Fellow. Rees has also been an exceptional teacher, both as an individual lecturer and as a programme director, and his leadership was a pivotal factor in the 100% mark achieved by the Department in the UK Quality Assurance Agency subject review.

While we shared the same Imperial College roots, I first met Rees in 1968 when I returned from USA to take up a position as Reader in Materials Science in the newly formed Department of Materials at Queen Mary College. We soon collaborated in the context of the University of London through the Special Advisory Committee on Materials Science, which created an academic framework for this developing subject. Following my appointment as Editor of *Journal of Materials Science* in 1973, Rees became one of my most reliable, constructive and timely referees. With the subsequent expansion of the *Journal*, and the launch of *Journal of Materials Science Letters*, there was a need for an enlarged editorial team. Rees was the obvious candidate to become Deputy Editor of the two *Journals* and I was delighted when he agreed to take on these arduous roles. Rees was superb as Deputy Editor, a position which he managed with alacrity in spite of the many competing demands on his time, continuing the “small journal” tradition of personal footnotes to authors when the *Journal* had achieved “big journal” page numbers and always maintaining the highest academic standards. Consequently, Rees was the natural successor to the Editorship on my retirement from this position in

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2002 and he has led the Journal with aplomb as Co-Editor-in-Chief.

Hence, it is certainly most appropriate to publish this special issue of the Journal in recognition of the

exceptional contribution and service of Professor Rees Rawlings over so many years. I am very pleased to add my personal tribute to a stellar colleague and friend.