Scientific Contributions of Professor Herbert C. Brown

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This year a number of current and former colleagues of Herbert Charles Brown, R.B. Wetherill Research Professor of Purdue University, join his family to celebrate his 66th birthday. It is my understanding that H.C. Brown is to officially retire from his current position sometime this year. As an introduction to this Special Issue conceived by some of us as a tribute to H.C. Brown on this occasion, it is appropriate to sum up the numerous scientific contributions of this so very versatile and original chemist.

Without a doubt, H.C. Brown is one of the most prolific chemists of all time. Since he started publishing in 1938, Brown has published more than 700 papers. Last year, he published over 45 papers and has showed no sign of slowing down his research activity. Of his first 700 publications, approximately 500 papers have appeared in the Journal of the American Chemical Society. The other ca. 200 publications include 4 books and some 60 review articles.

Although H.C. Brown has only one child, Charles, and one granddaughter, Tamar, he has produced more than 200 "chemical children" who were or are currently associated with him as graduate and post-doctoral students over the past 40 years. At least 50 of the former Brown associates currently hold faculty positions over the world, and have produced numerous "chemical grandchildren" of H.C. Brown.

Through these publications and educational activities, H.C. Brown has established himself as one of the most influential chemists of our time. In this connection, it is informative to consult the Chemical Citation Index, which clearly reveals that, year after year, H.C. Brown has been one of the most frequently cited organic chemists. He may have been the most frequently cited of all organic chemists over the past decade or two.

The list of H.C. Brown's publications is too voluminous to reproduce here. Instead, I shall attempt to describe his contributions in digest form in a more or less chronological manner.

1. Chicago Period, 1936—1943 (Discovery of "Sodium borohydride" and related borohydrides, reduction of carbonyl compounds with "Diborane")

During the first period of his career at the University of Chicago, he was associated with Professors H.I. Schlesinger and M.S. Kharasch, two American pioneers in inorganic chemistry and organic chemistry, respectively, first as a