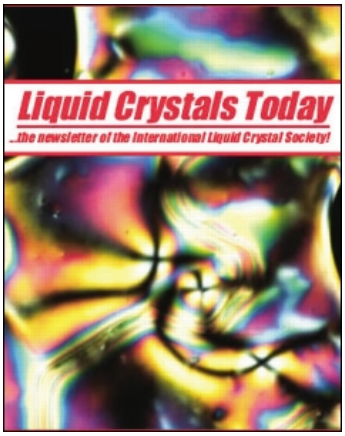

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Editorial Comment

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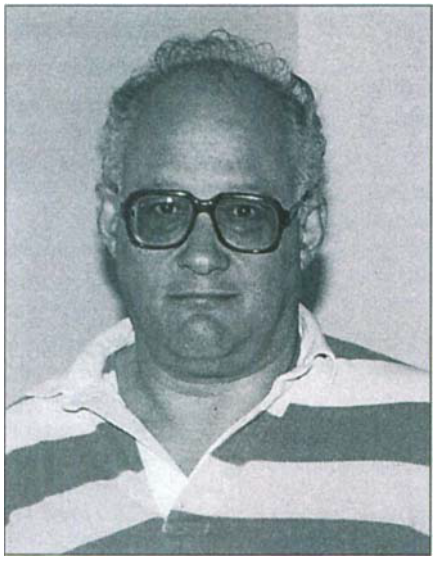
IN MEMORIAM

Dr Richard M. Hornreich: Noted Theorist on Phase Transitions*

Richard Hornreich, distinguished physicist in the Department of Complex Systems at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, and a leading theorist on cholesteric and blue phases of liquid crystals, died of a heart attack on 24 October 1994; he was 56. He is survived by his wife Geraldine, two daughters, a son, two granddaughters, and his mother.



Dick (as he was known to his friends and colleagues) grew up in the Bronx section of New York City before earning BSc, MSc and EE degrees in Electrical Engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After two years with the LFE Corporation in Boston, he returned to graduate at the Weizmann Institute and obtained his PhD degree in Physics in 1967.

Following three years with GTE Corporation, he accepted a faculty position at the Weizmann Institute that he held for 24 years. He spent sabbatical leaves at Yale University and Imperial College, London. He served in several administrative capacities including Dean of the Feinberg Graduate School and Chairman of his Department at the Weizmann Institute. He established collegial research efforts with many physicists, most notably Professor S. Shtrikman, and directed numerous students. He was honoured with the Leedy Memorial Award in 1972 for his work on the magnetoelectric effect and was a member of the American Physical Society, the Israel Physical Society, Sigma Xi and the IEEE.

Dick's research interests covered a wide range of topics in condensed matter physics where he consistently made ground-breaking contributions. From work on magnetic systems and phase transitions early in his career, he developed the beautiful and elegant theory of the Lifshitz point, which has been successfully used in nematic and smectic liquid crystals. Always interested in the mechanism for the onset of periodic structure, he pioneered in developing models of the cholesteric phase and the blue phases of liquid crystals. Critical phenomena, melting in reduced dimensionality, the existence of photonic band gaps in structures of specific symmetry, and boundary layer order transitions in nematogenic systems were all problems of interest to him.

* Reprinted from the abstract of the Memorial Session, 16 ILCC, Kent State University, 1996.

Editorial Comment

Liquid crystal displays continue to make inroads into the display market, and are challenging CRTs for dominance in this major industry. Other technologies compete with liquid crystal displays, and constant improvement and developments are necessary to maintain the position of LCDs at the forefront of the display industry. There can be no doubt that LCDs have been hugely successful; what is still not known is the ultimate extent of this success. The series of SID sponsored conferences on displays provide opportunities to compare progress in the different technologies, and for liquid crystal industry the SID meetings are increasingly important shop windows for LCD technology. The latest

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In this issue:

SID conference is EuroDisplay '96, held in Birmingham, UK in October, and a full report will appear in the next issue of *Liquid Crystals Today*. As with previous such conferences there was a wide range of display science and technology presented, but the Keynote Addresses by James Smith (Philips) and Peter Raynes (Sharp Laboratories of Europe) specifically considered the challenge to the CRT, and how far we can expect flat panel displays to go in the display market.

This very active industrial scene in LCDs should be good news for liquid crystal research and development, as increasing market-share for LCDs produces more income for investment in basic research. However, the industrial successes for LCDs are not benefiting liquid crystal research in general, and much basic LC research is under financial pressure in Europe and the US. The emphasis is now on development, with the clear objective of improving LC displays, at the expense of the basic research that ultimately makes the developments possible. Perhaps there is too much fundamental research in liquid crystal science; what is certain is that there will be less under the present financial constraints, but the long term consequences of this are much harder to predict. Most funding agencies now expect application and exploitation to be important objectives for research, and this necessarily restricts the research areas supported. It is paradoxical that coincidentally with the industrial success of the liquid crystal industry, basic research in liquid crystals should be threatened. Had the success remained a promise rather than reality, then the funding for basic research would still be flowing. Perhaps there is no problem, and the basic research will be supported as and when necessary, but it would be interesting to have the views of researchers from both the basic and development sides of liquid crystal science.

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