

PROFESSOR DERK HEIKENS

On April 18th 1986 Professor Dr. Derk Heikens will give his valedictory lecture at the Eindhoven University of Technology. With this lecture Professor Heikens' active contributions to polymer science in his capacity of University professor will come to an end. Traditionally, such an occasion lends itself admirably to taking a retrospective view.

Professor Heikens' career can very well be described by the word 'versatility', although it always concerned polymers. In 1952 he took his doctor's degree with J. J. Hermans on the thesis 'Dichroism of dyed cellulose fibres'. During this period he was employed with AKU NV as fellow worker of P. H. Hermans. This collaboration resulted in his important work on the polymerization kinetics and the molecular weight distribution of polyamides, in particular nylon-6. At the same time he carried out some fundamental research in the field of small-angle X-ray scattering. In 1959 he took up a research post at the Eindhoven University of Technology. He played a prominent part in the foundation of polymer laboratories at the Universities of Eindhoven and Groningen. In 1963 he was appointed a professor extraordinary at Groningen State University and became a full professor at Eindhoven University of Technology in 1964.

At first his research interests lay in polymerization, polymer complexes and fibres but later he initiated two main lines in research in the Eindhoven laboratory, namely the kinetics of copolymerization and the (mechanical) properties of polymer blends and composites. The latter topic enabled him to bridge the, at the time, enormous gap between polymer science and materials science, and we can see now that his efforts were very fruitful. These research activities, always characterized by a multidisciplinary approach, have resulted in some forty scientific publications. In addition, Professor Heikens was internationally active through his participation, often as invited speaker, in many conferences and summer schools. International appreciation for his work was also expressed by his being appointed a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Chemistry and his membership of the International Advisory Board of 'Polymer'.

We wish him all the best and we do hope that, in other capacities, he will remain actively involved in Polymer and Materials Science and continue his useful work on the Advisory Editorial Board of 'Polymer'.

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