

## Obituary

**Sundar L. Aggarwal** (13 August 1922–1 October 1996)



Sundar L. 'Aggie' Aggarwal died of a heart attack on 1 October 1996. He was born in 1922 in Jullundur, India, where he obtained BSc and MSc degrees in 1942 and 1943. In 1945, he was one of a small group of Indian graduates who were selected for further study in the US in recognition of help provided by India to US armed forces during World War II. Aggie obtained a PhD in Polymer Science and stayed on at Cornell University to work for one year as a postdoctoral fellow with Paul Flory. It was at Cornell that he met his wife, Eleanor, who was also a graduate student in Chemistry. They married and moved to Pune, India, in 1950 where Aggie worked at the National Chemical Laboratories. Their son Vijay (who is also a chemist) was born in Pune.

Aggie returned to the US in 1952 to work at Olin Mathieson Chemical Company in New Haven, Connecticut, on polypropylene oxide rubbers. Eventually he joined the General Tire and Rubber Company

in 1957. He settled in Akron, two daughters were added to the family and Eleanor and Aggie became much loved citizens. Aggie retired from the General Tire and Rubber Company (by then known as GenCorp) as Vice President and Director of Research in 1988. In retirement he continued to be active as a consultant to a number of companies in Europe, USA and India. His contribution to the Akron community has been honoured posthumously by the distinguished award of Council of the Akron Council of Engineering and Scientific Societies.

Aggie was an enthusiastic and unrepentant advocate of the role of R&D in industry as an essential ingredient for new products, new processes and new business and, equally important, for troubleshooting. He was an imaginative director of programmes of work on new polymers, on the novel properties and applications of block copolymers, on rheological studies applied to

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polymer processing, on composites and the development of computer models to investigate the performance of tyres. Aggie was author of 50 papers and held 21 patents. He recognized clearly the importance of building good relations with universities and research institutes and maintained a network of contacts throughout the world. He was a popular figure at international conferences.

The Gordon Conferences were dear to Aggie's heart. He served for some years on the committee overseeing the general programme. Most of all, he held court for many years at the Elastomers Conference held regularly at Colby College, New Hampshire. Indeed he suffered his first heart attack at one of these conferences and always remained grateful for the treatment he received at the hospital associated with the nursing school attached to the College. On his last visit to the UK, in September 1995, he was actively seeking contributions on behalf of Dr Halasa who is organizing the programme for July

1997. Sadly, Aggie will not be there as he had planned to hear these contributions.

When the Editor of *Polymer* sought to increase the international membership of the Editorial Advisory Board in 1976, Aggie was one of the first US polymer scientists to be appointed. He was also editor of volume seven, dealing with polymer technology in the *Encyclopedia of Comprehensive Polymer Science*. He edited the First Supplement and one of his last efforts was to complete the Second Supplement. He proposed then that this should be the last volume in the series. And so it will be—a testament to a good scientist and industrialist of stature in his field, and a generous friend to members of his community at home in Akron and abroad.

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