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Editorial

Virtual special issue on nanocomposites dedicated to Donald R. Paul

We are pleased to introduce to you the first VIRTUAL SPECIAL ISSUE of *Polymer*, a collection of papers to a common subject, which have been published in *Polymer* recently. We have decided to come up with VIRTUAL SPECIAL ISSUES periodically aiming at highlighting a particularly interesting aspect of polymer science and technology. The collections are carefully selected by the *Polymer* editors responsible for the respective field. They are meant to present a set of excellent contributions to *Polymer*, to cover different aspects of the overall theme, and nonetheless, they will reflect to some extent the personal preference of the responsible editors.

For the first VIRTUAL SPECIAL ISSUE, we have chosen "Nanocomposites" as the subject. The incorporation of well-defined particles of nanoscopic dimensions into polymeric materials has become an area of constantly increasing interest ranging from fundamental questions all the way to suitably modified plastics already entering the market. It involves tailor-made chemistry both on the particle surface and on the polymer side, it requires state-of-the-art analysis techniques to establish the nanoscopic structural details, it involves assessment of the novel macroscopic materials properties, and last not least, an in-depth understanding of the underlying physics is a challenge to both theory and computer simulation. The issue of Nanocomposites nicely reflects the broad range of polymer science and technology covered by *Polymer*. Therefore it is not surprising that Nanocomposites has quickly become an area in which *Polymer* is particularly strong and known for.

The Editors of *Polymer* are proud to dedicate this first VSI to our colleague Prof. Donald R. Paul from the University of Texas in Austin on the occasion of his 70th birthday. At the same time, we celebrate this way our most prolific and most cited author not only in recent years but also in the entire 50 years old history of Polymer. We are grateful to Benny D. Freeman who nicely describes Don's outstanding scientific achievements below.

Happy birthday Don!

G. Krausch, C.C. Han and S.Z.D. Cheng

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