

Preface

This special issue of *The European Physical Journal D* contains papers which have been presented at the 13th International Symposium on Small Particles and Inorganic Clusters. *ISSPIC 13* was held from July 23rd to 28th, 2006 in Göteborg, Sweden. The ISSPIC conference series started in 1976 and has since evolved into a leading biennial international cluster and nanoscience meeting. The conference followed previous meetings in the series by focusing on a balanced overview of new results, emerging trends and perspectives pertaining to the physics and chemistry of atomic and molecular clusters. The meeting was attended by 300 scientists from 29 different countries with approximately one third of the participants being graduate students. At the conference, 36 invited and hot-topic lectures were given and over 260 posters were presented. In keeping with the tradition of the ISSPIC meetings, there were no parallel sessions and a significant amount of time was devoted to the lively poster sessions (ca. 5 hours per session).

One of the sessions at the conference was dedicated to the memory of the late Nobel Laureate, Prof. Rick E. Smalley. Prof. Smalley was a very influential member of the ISSPIC community who made major, pioneering contributions including the development of cluster sources, the study of the spectroscopy and reactivity of clusters, the discovery of fullerenes and the production and characterization of carbon nanotubes. He will be greatly missed.

The central subject of this conference series continues to be the fundamental science of finite size effects and the possibility of controlling the properties of material at the nanometer scale. This is reflected in the papers published here. Each contribution accepted for publication had to follow the strict rules of *The European Physical Journal* regarding original publications.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who contributed to the success of *ISSPIC 13*. A particular thank you is reserved for the principal conference sponsors: the Royal Swedish Academy of Science (KVA) via the Nobel Institute for Physics, the Swedish Strategic Research Foundation (SSF) and the Swedish Research Council (VR).

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