

To Professor Otto J. Scherer on the Occasion of his 75th Birthday



Otto J. Scherer, emeritus professor at the University of Kaiserslautern, celebrated his 75th birthday on Christmas Day 2008. On this occasion, some of his colleagues and former students are dedicating to him a collection of research papers in the present issue of *Zeitschrift für Naturforschung B, Chemical Sciences*, as a token of appreciation and friendship.

Otto J. Scherer was born and educated in the town of Amberg in Northern Bavaria, an area with a long tradition in steel industry. He therefore first started studies in iron-works engineering at the Technische Hochschule Aachen, but the introductory lectures and courses in chemistry he had to take in the fundamental training there fascinated him so much that he soon switched fully to chemistry. After his first degree he moved to Universität München, where he later joined the research group of Max Schmidt to get his diploma and PhD degree with studies in sulfur chemistry (1962). For the following years he held appointments as an assistant professor at the universities of Munich, Marburg and Würzburg, where he completed his research for the habilitation in inorganic chemistry (1967) with independent work in silicon-nitrogen chemistry.

In 1970 he accepted the call to a chair at the newly founded Universität Kaiserslautern where he was professor of inorganic chemistry until his retirement in 2001. In the last thirty years, chemistry at Kaisers-

lautern has grown into a modern, competitive teaching and research institution, and it owes its great success to a great deal to the enormous dedication and effort Otto Scherer has put into his commitments there.

In research, he became one of the leading scientists in the chemistry of low-valent and low-coordinate phosphorus. With a rapidly growing number of students in his group he made many significant contributions which were published in a large number of papers in the leading chemistry journals. A highlight was the book he wrote on this subject together with his Kaiserslautern organic chemistry colleague Manfred Regitz which has become a classic and an invaluable source of information and inspiration. With a characteristic sort of subtle humour, he was a motivating teacher and a stimulating research leader.

Over the years, Otto Scherer received offers from outside Kaiserslautern, but he was faithful to his *alma mater* which together with his colleagues he has shaped and modeled in many ways. His work was recognized by awards and honours including foremost the Alfred Stock medal of the GDCh, the highest prize of this Society in inorganic chemistry.

The editors and publisher of *ZfNB* join Otto Scherer's colleagues and friends in wishing him all the best: *ad multos annos!*

Hubert Schmidbaur and Norbert Kuhn