

Professor Vojtech Kellö – an Octogenarian



I was very pleased to have the opportunity to put down some sentences in honour of my unforgettable teacher, later on my intimate colleague and finally my excellent friend Professor Vojtech Kellö to his meaningful anniversary.

Professor *Vojtech Kellö*, Nestor of Slovak physicochemists celebrated on May 10th, 1999 his eightieth anniversary in outstanding physical and mental conditions. The Sisters Three have given him many enviable gifts, *inter alia* good health, high intelligence, endeavour, persistence, humanity, humility and dignity, cordiality and real optimism, ability to perceive beauty and an unrestrained curiosity. Moreover, he had been put in the proper cradle in a family where all the above-mentioned outstanding features could be well developed.

Although the honoured person started his study at the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Charles University in Prague, the first noticeable initiation into the world of science made after graduation at the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava, where he gained his PhD. degree in 1947. In 1951 he was appointed head of the Department of Physical Chemistry at the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava and in 1953 and 1957 he was appointed lecturer and professor, respectively. In this time period he was fully engaged in writing manuals on physics and physical chemistry, and what has to be stressed, also organized courses and research in physics and physical chemistry with persistence of his own; as a result, scientific activity of his Department became an example for other departments at the Faculty of Chemical Technology.

Scientific activities of Professor Kellö are quite intensive both in the number of original papers and projects solved. His professional career concerned research of molecular compounds bound by hydrogen bridges, basic physicochemical principles of a series of chemical reactions initiated by heat, light, and external electric field proceeding in fused systems, especially in liquid hydrocarbons and polymers. In order to investigate structural changes in the afore-mentioned systems progressive physicochemical methods had to be applied as *e.g.* IR spectroscopy, nuclear electron and nuclear magnetic resonances, method of light diffusion, little-angle X-ray diffraction, *etc.* Professor Kellö was a leading personality in this field due mainly to his scientific intuition in the domain of physical consideration and a general physicochemical erudition. It could consequently be said that he was an important scientific co-creator, or in other words arbiter of all interpretations of experimental data gained. Scientific results of these projects became a highlight of knowledge because many of them were applied in technology and initiated foundation of a scientific school in the field of polymer destructions which found its permanent place at the Department of Physical Chemistry of the Slovak University of Technology. The outstanding results of our honoured person prized by the State Award determined him to become a leading personality – bearing all academic degrees – in managing and organizing scientific activities in the Czechoslovak and Slovak Academies of Sciences, where he proved his extraordinary and unrivalled abilities.

Further, efforts of Professor Kellö concerning his pedagogic, research, and managerial activities would surely be of interest, but I would like to turn attention to his exceptional personal and moral accomplishments, too. He is endowed with a charm, excellent charisma, simple life-style, and a fundamental paradigm of life – the love of mankind. His pedagogic career was associated firmly with his personal trajectory, he was not only an excellent lecturer and professor, but much more – a pedagogic personality. He was animated by physical chemistry and delivered lectures through his own life-style. He led his students and coworkers to work hard, be modest, principal, tolerant, steady and, first of all, to love the art of life – and all this without moralizing. He not only fulfilled his dreams but expected them also with us, assistants, lecturers, professors, well anticipated the progress in society and believed that the good is anchored in every human being and that it will finally be victorious. Students and colleagues were gratified at contacting him, appreciated his original personality and charm, irradiating smile, kindness, understanding, high general erudition and an extraordinarily good memory. He has been a distinguished specialist characteristic of his criticism, nobleness, rather taciturn, but his words

were always weighted precisely. His philosophic bird's-eye view governed over the daily rush, his love to life and students prevailed anyway. That is why he has become an unforgettable teacher of several generations.

Professor Kellö approaches his anniversary in full health, loved by his family in a complete working activity manifested *inter alia* with his regular attendance at the Department of Physical Chemistry, where he takes occasionally part in scientific discussions.

I would like to congratulate Professor Kellö in the name of his thankful students, coworkers, colleagues, and never forgotten technicians of the Department of Physical Chemistry, colleagues of the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Slovak Academy of Sciences, members of the Slovak and Czech Chemical Societies and wish him good and steady health and a lifetime family background with a gratitude for his admirable, nice, and humanistically excellent achievements.

L. Valko

The collective of the Editor's Office of the Journal *Chemical Papers* join in congratulations on Professor Kellö's anniversary. Professor Kellö published the first communication in this Journal already in its first volume (1947) and since the fourth one he was member of the *Editorial Board*.

Professor Vojtech Kellö gave long years of service to the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and the Slovak Academy of Sciences as member of their governing bodies and various committees. For his outstanding contribution to science he was awarded the State Prize, the National Prize, the Order of Labour, and many medals, e.g. the Golden Medal of the Slovak Technical University, the Golden Medal of the Comenius University, the Golden Medal of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, the Golden J. Heyrovský Medal for Merits in Chemical Sciences, and the Golden Medal of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences for Merits for Science and Humanity.

In the period from 1971 to 1981 Academician Kellö was *Editor-in-Chief* of the Journal *Chemické zvesti* (*Chemical Papers*) and enhanced its international reputation and scientific level. For this he deserves our sincere gratitude.