

member of the board of governors of Haifa University and of the American Friends of the Hebrew University.

In the field of textile chemistry and dyes he has carried on extensive work on the history of dyeing and finishing. In 1960, he studied the fabrics from the Bar Kochba caves in the Dead Sea area. With associates at Dexter, he developed new techniques for separation of individual dyes and the



Sidney Milton Edelstein

utilization of IR spectra for identification purposes. His research has included a reexamination of the chemistry of Tyrian Purple.

In the field of dye technology, Edelstein has been granted 12 American and 26 foreign patents on textile chemicals and textile finishing. He has contributed important tests and practical methods to the mercerizing industry. His Barium Number is now an official method of the A.A.T.C.C. He also pioneered the development and application of alkali soluble cellulose solutions. His research of cellulose zincate solutions (kopan, celfon) and their applications was a factor in expansion of production of military netting during World War II. His work on phosphate co-esters has placed versatile chemicals in the hands of the wet processing industries. His work on uron structure played an important role in the development of wash-and-wear and permanent press technology.

By the mid-fifties, Edelstein was convinced that history of chemistry lacked broad visibility at a time when important work was still being done by older enthusiasts while a new generation of enthusiasts was entering the field. It was his decision to give recognition to workers in the history of chemistry by creating an award in the field. The

result was the Dexter Award, to be administered by the History of Chemistry Division of the American Chemical Society. The award was to be given annually and carried an honorarium and plaque for the recipient. The machinery for issuance of the Dexter Award was set up in time for granting of the first award to Ralph Oesper in September 1956.

The award was to be given for recognition of longtime contributions to the field, publication of a significant book or paper, preparation of a bibliography, or of other services of significance to the development of the history of chemistry. The history division set up an awards committee consisting of three members with staggered three-year appointments. Members of the selection committee are appointed by the chairman of HIST and serve anonymously. The secretary of HIST announces a call for nominations for the next award and receives nominations until the deadline has been reached. The nominations are passed on to members of the awards committee and the selection is announced in the Spring - with the award being given at the Fall ACS meeting.

Part II of the series, dealing with the first decade of the Dexter Award, will appear in the next issue.

Dr. Aaron Ihde is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Chemistry of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706. A Past-Chair of the Division (1962-1964) and a winner of the Dexter Award (1968) himself, Dr. Ihde is perhaps best known for his classic text "The Development of Modern Chemistry", which has recently been reissued as a Dover paperback.

BOOK NOTES

Essays on the History of Organic Chemistry, James G. Traynham (Editor), Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge and London, 1987. ix + 145 pp. Cloth. \$25.00

At their worst the published proceedings for special symposia consist of camera-ready copy done in at least five type styles, cheaply bound and outrageously overpriced for the library market. Editing is minimal and about a fourth of the papers are usually unrelated, save in the most charitable sense of the word, to the central theme of the symposium. If this caricature represents one end of the spectrum, then the book under review represents the other extreme, as it is an example *par excellence* of what books of this type can and should be.

Based on the 1984 Mardi Gras Symposium in Organic

Chemistry at Louisiana State University - Baton Rouge, the book contains eight essays. The authors represent a good mix of practicing chemists and professional historians of science and the historical orientation of the essays themselves ranges from the conceptual (the origins of conformational analysis, optical activity and organic nomenclature) to the disciplinary (origins of the physical organic chemistry community) and the philosophical (convention versus ontology in 19th century organic chemistry). The book is typeset with excellent integration of the illustrations and figures and a uniform format for each essay. Evidence of careful editing is present on every page and, to top it off, the book is reasonably priced.

Indeed, it is difficult to find anything to criticize. As a half-hearted attempt, one might point out that two of the essays, that dealing with the sugar industry in Louisiana and that dealing with chemical trivia, do stretch the central theme a bit, being more properly examples of industrial-analytical chemistry and - well - chemical trivia! But both essays are so well done and entertaining that one would have to be a heartless curmudgeon to object to their inclusion. In short, this is an excellent, affordable volume which belongs on the shelves of all chemists with an interest in the development of their science.

A special discount coupon for members of the Division wishing to order this volume can be found on the back cover.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

What do you think of when your thoughts turn to HIST? I invite you to look at our Division with me.

HIST is one of the smallest of the 32 divisions of the ACS (current membership 700), and, while there is strength in numbers, as the cliché says, various measures of division quality show HIST to have unusual strengths in spite of its size. Membership has been growing steadily, as a result of effective promotion by Al Kirsch, past membership chair and now Chair-Elect of the Division. Ray Seymour, newly-elected Alternate Councilor for HIST, has agreed to accept the additional responsibilities of membership chair. I expect our roll of members to continue to grow.

Budgeting is important to all divisions, and a major part of HIST's income is the annual allocation from the National Society. Divisional allocations are based on three variables: total membership; responses to the question on national meeting registration forms, "Which division's program influenced you most to attend?"; and reported attendance at national meeting sessions sponsored by the division. HIST



James G. Traynham
1988 Chair

ranks sixth among the 32 divisions in the allocation per member. That ranking indicates to me that the imaginative programming by Mary Virginia Orna, our Program Chair, pays off, in every sense. The implication of that allocation seems even more applaudable when one reflects that most HIST members probably are members of other divisions, too, and divide their attendance time among them. The HIST programming for the meeting in Toronto in June, both symposia and general papers, is so appealing that our allocation rank may even go higher. Remember to record HIST on your meeting registration form: It pays.

The Dexter Chemical Company, through the commitment of Dr. Sidney Edelstein, Chairman of the Board, and Dr. David Abrahams, President, annually awards a plaque and \$2,000 to a Dexter Awardee selected by a committee of HIST. This award is not one of those administered by the National Society office, but it is the only one given through an ACS unit for outstanding accomplishments in the history of chemistry. I am glad that HIST has such a direct involvement in this significant award.

HIST also presents an annual award (plaque and \$100) to the author of the paper judged to be the outstanding paper presented at a national meeting in a general papers session sponsored by HIST. The HIST Program Committee members, assisted by a few other persons, take the responsibility of reading manuscripts of general papers before the meetings, of listening to the presentations, and of evaluating them and selecting the award winner. The restriction of the award to general session papers is a recent action by the Executive Committee and is intended to