

Silicon Symposium History

By

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In 1967, Makoto Kumada of Kyoto University was chosen as the 6th recipient of the Frederic Stanley Kipping award - the first Japanese scientist ever to win a national award of the American Chemical Society. It seemed to me that this unique event should be marked in some way. Don Weyenberg of Dow Corning Corporation, sponsors of the award, agreed with this idea, and we began to plan a special organosilicon symposium in Prof. Kumada's honor.

Because Professor Kumada's Kipping award was to be presented at the spring ACS meeting in Philadelphia, it seemed logical to hold the special organosilicon symposium immediately before the ACS meeting. We therefore approached University of Pennsylvania professor Alan MacDiarmid (Nobel Laureate 2000), who happily agreed to make arrangements to hold the symposium at the University.



That first meeting, which was to become the first Organosilicon Symposium, was enthusiastically received, attracting about 50 participants from industry and academia. A symposium devoted to silicon chemistry was then planned for the following year for Kipping awardee Ulrich Wannagat, in Wisconsin. A tradition had begun.

In the early years, the Organosilicon Symposium was scheduled just before, or just after the spring ACS meeting, usually in the same or a nearby city. By 1982, however, the impact and popularity of the symposia had grown so significantly that this no longer seemed necessary, and since then symposium has been scheduled independently of the ACS meetings. On two occasions, the Organosilicon Symposium was combined with triennial International Organosilicon Symposia: St. Louis (1987), and Guanajuato (2002). In 2004 the name of the symposia was changed from "Organosilicon Symposium" to "Silicon Symposium", to better reflect the breadth of silicon chemistry now typically covered by the meeting.

The organosilicon community in North America was the first to institute yearly organosilicon symposia. These have now served as the model for annual organosilicon meetings in Japan and Korea, as well as the biennial silicon days in Europe.