

FELICITATIONS TO PROFESSOR GÉZA SCHAY

On the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the existence of the Technical University Budapest the University Council conferred the degree of honorary doctor on its emeritus professor Géza Schay, the illustrious physicochemist. I should like to appraise his personality on these pages — officially as the present dean of the Faculty of Chemical Engineering and with my personal feelings and discipular reverence as his former student and co-worker.

First I met Professor Schay in 1950, when he read physical chemistry to us, the subject dreaded from hearsay. He read the lectures and we, around 150 students, attempted to understand, with varying success, what he was reading. At first we did not consider him a good lecturer, up to the moment when we found out that we must prepare for each lecture. When, however, we went to the lectures prepared in advance, we experienced his exceptional capacity to present aspects of the topic in question that we could never have been able to find out by ourselves from books.

From 1953 I had the luck to become co-worker of Professor Schay. I consider this one as the happiest period of my life. I had the chance to participate closely in the immense creative work which he performed in the past thirty years.

His oeuvre has been reviewed many times. Let me therefore point out its most important stages only.

— His book entitled *Theoretical Physical Chemistry* was the first manual in Hungarian in this subject that hit the international level.

— His work on *gas adsorption* is an important development compared to the BET theory.

— His book on *gas chromatography* which first appeared in German was a pioneer work.

— In the field of *liquid adsorption* no paper is published at the present stage without citing Schay's activities.

It is a privilege for my lifetime that I was able to assist him in attaining some of his results.

Finally, I wish to mention two features of the scientist Schay that I always envied and was unable even to approach. The first: to grasp the essence of

things by intuition in certain cases. He is capable of putting questions in an extraordinary manner to himself, to others and to phenomena. The second: his unparalleled scrupulousness, preciseness and conscientiousness. If Professor Schay gives his assent to a manuscript, the author may be absolutely certain that both the content and the wording of his paper is correct.

I sincerely hope that from this sketchy portrait of Professor Schay as a scientist it will become manifest that the *doctor honoris causa* degree of the Technical University Budapest was awarded to a man worthy of it. My heartiest congratulations in the name of the Faculty of Chemical Engineering. We wish Professor Schay good health and further successes.

LAJOS GYÖRGY NAGY

Note: A detailed review of Professor Schay's activities and a bibliography of his works was published in *Periodica Polytechnica Chemical Engineering* 20, 3-11 (1976)