

Professor Helgard G. Raubenheimer



The present issue of *Zeitschrift für Naturforschung B, Chemical Sciences*, is a collection of publications dedicated to Professor Helgard Raubenheimer, who celebrated his 65th birthday in 2006 and who is now approaching his retirement from the University of Stellenbosch, Matieland, South Africa, by the end of this year. By their contributions, present and former colleagues and students, along with other friends in the scientific community, show their affection to his personality and their appreciation of the research work carried out in his laboratories.

Helgard Raubenheimer was born in Humansdorp in the Cape Province of the Republic of South Africa on July 27, 1941, and went to school in the small town of Bredasdorp and in Belleville, near Cape Town. After his high school years in Belleville he studied chemistry at the University of Stellenbosch, finishing there with an MSc degree in 1965. After a short interlude as a researcher in a local tobacco company, he returned to his *alma mater* to serve as a lecturer and carry out research for a PhD degree under the guidance

of D. H. de Kock and M. J. de Vries. In 1970 he was appointed Senior Lecturer of Inorganic Chemistry at the Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg, where he reached the rank of Professor in 1979 and finally became Head of Department in 1983. In 1998 he accepted the Chair of Inorganic Chemistry at the University of Stellenbosch, where he is presently Head of the Department of Chemistry and Polymer Science.

Professor Raubenheimer has spent several sabbatical leaves in Europe, mainly at the Technische Universität München (as an Alexander von Humboldt fellow with E. O. Fischer and H. Schmidbaur in 1973, 1980 and 2004, respectively) and at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich (as a Lonza Visiting Professor with D. Seebach in 1985). He was an invited speaker at many international conferences and has organized several international meetings in South Africa, including events based on collaborations funded by the Volkswagen-Stiftung.

Helgard Raubenheimer has served on the editorial advisory boards of *South African Journal of Chem-*

istry, *Organometallics* and *Phosphorus, Sulfur and Silicon* as well as on many scientific committees in South Africa and abroad. He was honoured by being elected a Gold Medalist by the South African Chemical Institute in 2002 and a Fellow of the Royal Society of South Africa in 2003. He was chosen to give the Victor Pretorius Memorial Lecture at the University of Pretoria in 2000 and the P.D. Hahn Memorial Lecture at the University of Cape Town in 2004, and was a recipient of the Rector's Award for Outstanding Research at the University of Stellenbosch in 2003.

His research has covered a wide spectrum of topics with a main focus for many years on carbene complexes as specific synthons for chemical synthesis, and on the coordination and organometallic chemistry of gold. Other projects included new polymers and polymerization pathways, ionic liquids as reaction media, supramolecular aggregation, consecutive insertion reactions of CO, and conversion of CO₂. Much of this work followed new concepts, the "complex of complexes" model being the most recent

and most successful. With his impressive record of internationally recognized research achievements and his outstanding talent and dedication as an academic teacher, Helgard Raubenheimer has for many years been one of the most prominent representatives of the chemical sciences in South Africa.

Helgard is a great sportsman with an enviable physical condition. With year-round hard training units he has been able to appear annually in the top ranks of the famous Angus bicycle races around the Cape of Good Hope. Sooner or later he will be the first and only emeritus champion in his class.

The editors and the publisher of *Zeitschrift für Naturforschung B, Chemical Sciences*, are happy to be able to dedicate this special issue to Professor Raubenheimer, who has contributed so much to the existing good contacts between chemical scientists in South Africa and Germany.

Hubert Schmidbaur
Stephanie Cronje