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67. In Memoriam Hermann F. Mark

Otto Vogl

University of Massachusetts - Amherst, vogl@polysci.umass.edu

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IN MEMORIAM—PROFESSOR HERMANN F. MARK*by Otto Vogl*

Professor Hermann F. Mark died on April 6, 1992 shortly before his 97th birthday. Dr. Mark, Dean Emeritus of the Polytechnic University in Brooklyn, NY and former Director of the I. Chemical Institute of the University of Vienna, Austria, was a giant in higher education, research and communication of science to the public.

Hermann Mark was born in the 4th district of Vienna, in the Wieden, on May 3, 1895 as the son of a well-known Viennese family; his father was a prominent physician. After his studies in Vienna he enlisted in the Austro-Hungarian Army and served on both the eastern and Italian front. He was a highly decorated young officer whose decorations included the highly regarded Leopoldorden.

After the war, Hermann Mark continued his studies at the University of Vienna and received his Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry in 1921. Following his marriage to Maria Schamek, he began his professional career in Berlin at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute. He then spent a number of years in a leading position in the Germany Industry before returning to Vienna in 1933 as Professor of Physical Chemistry. During this period Mark continued, followed up and enlarged on his earlier pioneering work: the structure determination of natural and synthetic polymers. Polymers are giant molecules that are the constituents of plastics, fibers and films as well as biological materials.

Dr. Mark was an excellent teacher and lecturer; several Nobel prize recipients were among his students. During his period as professor in Vienna Dr. Mark was known for his clear and precise lectures, making even complicated problems seem simple. He was also a frequent lecturer in the Urania and the Volkshochschule.

The annexation of Austria by Germany forced Mark to leave Vienna. He went first to Canada and then to the United States. In 1941 he became a Professor of Chemistry at the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn and in 1944 founded the world famous Polymere Research Institute at this Institution which has been a "mecca" of

polymer research and education ever since.

Dr. Mark was also an unusual and outstanding international communicator in science and education. He was one of the founders of "Interscience Publishers," the publisher of the first series of books and periodicals in polymer science; he was a founding member of the Weisman Institute, and he was involved in the creation of several scientific organizations. Dr. Mark was a citizen of the world; he travelled extensively worldwide to lecture, to teach and to consult.

Dr. Mark was also a prolific author; he published over 600 papers and wrote or coedited about 40 books.

For his outstanding contributions Hermann Mark received 21 honorary doctoral degrees including one from the University of Vienna. He was a member of 10 Academies of Sciences including an honorary membership of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Dr. Mark was an honorary member or a fellow of 31 Societies, including the Austrian Chemical Society. Mark also received 50 medals and awards including the Grand Decoration of Honor in Gold for Merits to the Republic of Austria with a Star, the Golden Medal of Honor as well as the Science Medal of the City of Vienna, the Mayor's Award of Honor for Science and Technology of Vienna, the Gold Medal of the University of Vienna and the Austrian Honor Cross for Arts and Science, the Officer's Cross of the Republic of Austria for Merits in Science and the Arts. Professor Mark was also the recipient of the U.S. National Medal of Science.

Hermann Mark remained close to his home country, Austria. He devoted much time to Austria and its needs, especially after the Second World War. In his later years he spent months at a time in Vienna to provide advice and guidance at the University and to interact with Industry, especially at the Plastics Institute in the Arsenal.

Dr. Otto Vogl, a native of Austria, is the Hermann F. Mark Professor at the Polytechnic University in Brooklyn, New York.