In Memoriam

HERBERT E. SCHWEYER

Herbert E. Schweyer was born in Easton, PA, in 1910. He received his bachelor of science degree in chemical engineering and a masters in metallurgy from Lafayette College in the early thirties. His interest in asphalt technology and rheology was aroused during his college days and employment with Barber Asphalt Company. Eugene C. Bingham, Herb's physical chemistry professor, was trying to demonstrate that rigid materials such as marble, actually flowed. Other noted rheologists, Marcus Reiner and H. Hencky were working with Bingham at the time. Herb worked with Ralph Traxler, a well known asphalt technologist, up to 1937 when he left the Barber Asphalt Company to pursue a Doctor of Philosophy degree in chemical engineering at Columbia University. During World War II he was employed as a research chemical engineer for Texaco in Port Neches, Texas. In 1946 he started his teaching career at the University of Florida. In addition to teaching and supervision of candidates for the Masters and Doctor of Philosophy degrees, he was heavily involved in research with the Florida Department of Transportation and obtained several grants from the National Science Foundation. As a member of eight professional and technical societies, Herb was active in committee work and was a frequent contributor of technical papers. Over the years he authored about 100 technical papers on asphalt rheology, economics, and other subjects. He authored two books on engineering economics and received several patents.

He gave technical matters a high priority. At professional meetings he was a frequent contributor of new concepts. Discussions at meetings were usually very lively, especially when Herb considered somebody's technical view to be completely wrong. He always took time to explain concepts, testing methods, or other technical aspects to individuals who were genuinely interested in the subject. In particular, he was convinced that young engineers and scientists were the key to technological advancements in the future. Therefore, he felt it was important to explain his concepts and instill in the younger engineers an interest to carry on using his knowledge as a foundation for new developments.

Students who worked on Herb's research projects often called him "Doc." He enjoyed his students and they soon came to understand his brisk and blunt manner of telling them, in no uncertain terms, that they had messed up the test. If a student needed assistance, Herb was there willing to help them in any way possible. His depth of experience and creative ideas were a boon to students and colleagues alike.

Humor and an ability to laugh at himself was not a shortcoming of Herb's personality. He enjoyed hearing and conveying jokes or bits of dry humor. As John Ferguson of Winnepeg, Canada, put it: "His technical contributions have improved our understanding of rheology. With his input, a void would exist. However, our greatest loss will be the absence of his humorous comments which brought levity to the meetings.

He was a member of three honor societies and the recipient of various awards and citations for service. Probably the most significant award was the Lafayette College Alumni Citation for teaching chemical engineering. Herb was extremely proud of his Alma Mater, which was most evident when he wore his Lafayete cap or blazer with the Lafayette College crest.

His tireless years of research for the Florida Department of Transportation laid the groundwork for improvements in testing procedures and asphalt specifications. His involvement in the recycling of asphalt pavements resulted in the development of quality control requirements.

I believe that the culmination of his career goals occurred within the last four years. His forty some years of research had "paid off." Herb's understanding of asphalt flow characteristics, referred to as rheology, was complete. The testing device which he developed facilitated test measurements of rheological properties. The simplified rheological approach established by Herb has gained in acceptance in the technical community. Even some of his strongest opponents have recognized the validity and need for his rheological concepts.

A simple statement which I think summarizes Herbert Schweyer's efforts and contributions was made by Charles Potts: "He gave much more than he received." We shall miss him very much.

Byron E. Ruth
University of Florida