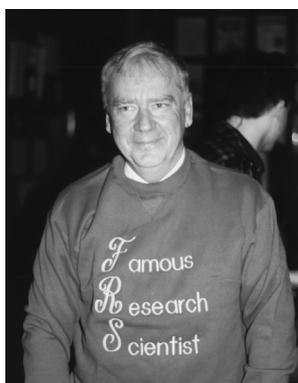


Editorial

In March, 2009, a gathering of main group chemists assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, for the 237th National Meeting of the American Chemical Society (ACS). One particular symposium, dubbed “CowleyFest II”, was arranged to honor Professor Alan H. Cowley, FRS, of The University of Texas, Austin, the recipient of the 2009 ACS Award for Distinguished Service to Inorganic Chemistry. Professor Cowley, currently the Robert A. Welch Professor of Chemistry, has been at the forefront of main group chemistry since his independent academic career began in the early 1960’s. The papers presented in this special issue of *Main Group Chemistry* are based on the talks given by Professor Cowley and many of his friends and colleagues during the multi-day symposium. The symposium was organized by Professor Richard A. Kemp of the University of New Mexico and Sandia National Laboratories, and Professor Michael Lattman of Southern Methodist University, with significant help from Professor David A. Atwood of the University of Kentucky and editor of *Main Group Chemistry*.

As the readers of this journal know well, main group chemistry is experiencing a resurgence in interest world-wide. This heightened interest is due to the importance of main group elements in many sub-fields of inorganic chemistry, ranging from fundamental studies of bonding and structure to more applied areas of materials chemistry and nanoscience. Research areas such as catalysis, bio-inorganic, inorganic polymer chemistry, ceramics, and semiconductors and photovoltaics all rely on main group elements as key components. The papers presented in this special issue span many of these focus areas and clearly demonstrate the cutting-edge nature of the current work of these research groups.



The symposium was organized not only to discuss recent results in main group chemistry, but also to honor Professor Cowley and pay tribute to his numerous scientific contributions in this field. When Professor Cowley began at The University of Texas, Austin, in the 1960’s the practice of main group chemistry was largely centered in Europe with very few practitioners in the United States. Professor Cowley, along with others such as Professors Robert Parry, Earl Muetterties, Robert West, Fred Hawthorne, Russell Grimes, and Harry Allcock and the numerous students they produced, all played significant roles in establishing main group chemistry as an exciting and useful subject to pursue in the US, of equal importance to the study of transition metals. During the past 40 years, Professor Cowley

has led a large number of students, postdoctoral fellows, and visiting scientists in pursuit of unique and scientifically-challenging problems. From his early days investigating cyclopolyphosphines and aminophosphines, through the study of low-coordination numbers and multiple-bonding, to his more recent work on materials chemistry, Professor Cowley has left virtually no main group element untouched, with a host of highly original and groundbreaking contributions resulting from these efforts. Today, as well as throughout his scientific career at The University of Texas, the common themes of main group chemistry and unusual bonding and structure continue to be the focus of his prolific research laboratory.

The “CowleyFest II” symposium could not have taken place without the efforts of an international, world-class group of scientists, all of whom generously paid their own travel and meeting costs to participate in the symposium. As well, the financial contributions of Sandia National Laboratories, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Southern Methodist University, Dr. Steve Baxter, and Dr. Jon Lasch were critical to the success of the meeting, and are gratefully acknowledged. Lastly, the guest editor (RAK) would like to personally acknowledge Professor Cowley for providing a stimulating and entertaining intellectual environment during the time of his own doctoral studies in the Cowley group, and to thank him for his valuable mentorship and guidance while he was a student at The University of Texas.

Richard A. Kemp
University of New Mexico Albuquerque, NM, USA