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Professor Alan Katritzky: Memorial Tetrahedron Symposium-in-Print

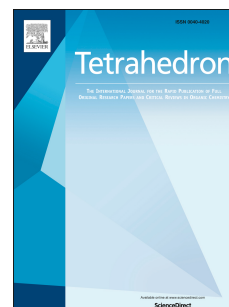
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PREFACE

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Many of us came to think of Alan Katritzky as indestructible and everlasting - a force-of-nature. The news of his death on February 10th 2014 at the age of 85 therefore came as a great shock. Alan's contributions to organic chemistry, particularly to the study and systematisation of heterocyclic chemistry, were immense. His achievements as founding professor of the Chemistry Department at UEA Norwich were also monumental. And then there were his contributions to University of Florida? Gainesville, to chemical education, to industrial links and to publishing. A more detailed appreciation of Alan's career, contributions and many achievements by John Boulton follows. I will therefore restrict my comments in this Preface to some personal observations.

In 1979, UEA advertised a lectureship in Organic Chemistry. I applied and was shortlisted and so met Alan Katritzky (ARK as he was known at UEA) for the first time. As part of the interview process, the shortlisted candidates had to give a short lecture (17 minutes $\pm$ 1) to the Department. ARK dominated the room with his strong personality and booming voice - and reduced at least one of the candidates to a trembling wreck, particularly worried that he might overrun by 1.5 minutes!

Alan moved to Florida in 1980 but the period of overlap enabled me to appreciate the breadth of his research interests, his organisational and financial skills, tremendous drive, and unquenchable enthusiasm. He ruled the Chemistry Department, ran a huge research group, had many industrial and international research collaborations, published prolifically, had a major editorial role with Tetrahedron Letters, travelled abroad on frequent lecture tours, organised industrial refresher courses, and much more besides. To a young lecturer, wanting to learn the ropes, watching ARK was instructive, if daunting. ARK's research group was truly international (in his later lectures he showed a world map indicating all the countries from which his research group had originated; he seemed rather put-out when I mentioned that I had a PhD student from Papua New Guinea, which

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