



DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

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Version: Post-print

Publisher's version: Thompson, A. (2018). Celebrating the 200th anniversary of Dalhousie University. *Canadian Journal of Chemistry*, 2018, 96(7): iii, <https://doi.org/10.1139/cjc-2018-0190>

Celebrating the 200th anniversary of Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

The year 2018 marks Dalhousie University's Bicentennial Anniversary. We proudly celebrate 200 years of leadership, inspiration and impact that characterizes our rich history as one of Canada's oldest universities. With *Dal200* occasions on campus, alumni gatherings across the globe and a coast-to-coast Canadian tour, there are many ways to celebrate. Visiting the Chemistry Family Day (Aug. 8), or browsing dal200.ca will open doors to these opportunities and more.

This special issue showcases the achievements of our chemistry alumni, friends and current Department members. Although unable to address every article herein, nor acknowledge every strength past and present, I do want to draw attention to the wonderful article *Chemistry at Dalhousie circa 1868* that provides insight to the study of chemistry when first introduced at Dalhousie. An appreciation of the need to balance and store energy for later use was as timely then as now. Dalhousie's new Clean Technologies Research Institute, based in Chemistry, fosters collaborative research in energy harvesting and storage. Another Dalhousie Chemistry research flagship is synthesis, including cutting-edge development of catalysts. Analysis, biosystems and theory round out our strengths.

Chemistry at Dalhousie is well-positioned to inspire the next generation, empowering students for careers where science underscores change and advancement in society. To succeed, we need to work together as evident when Mike Boutilier, our go-to person for workshop and mechanical solutions, was awarded the 2018 Rosemary Gill Award in recognition of his commitment of service to students. Trainees and faculty members were recipients of honours on national and international scales. Our community unmistakably pulls together in the newly renovated Student Advanced Resource Centre – alumni will recall this location for study, conversation and perhaps a Friday beverage or two. To best meet their needs, undergraduates reimagined the Centre as welcoming, accessible and modern. The Department found a way to transform the space with those goals in mind and, although fundraising for adjacent rooms and enhanced lighting is still underway, an official unveiling was held earlier this year.

This special issue includes articles from our alumni and friends. We proudly include work by Professors Arnold, Boéré, Wagner and Watts knowing that their Dal undergraduate days set them on a path of discovery as a chemist. We are honoured that authors Bryce, Campbell, Hallett-Tapley, Marangoni and Pearson, who all earned graduate degrees within the Department, also join us. Professors Burford, Weaver and Welch have continued their success elsewhere, yet their faculty careers at Dalhousie surely ring fresh in their minds as they help celebrate *Dal200*.

Our community is strong and valued as we support those who will become the next generation of advocates and explorers. Alongside day-to-day study support, scholarships and prizes provide tangible assistance to students striving to reach and maintain their utmost potential. For this we offer sincere thanks. A recent example is Jean Cooley (First-Class Honours in 1971) who initiated the Dr. Jean Cooley Graduate Fellowship in Analytical Chemistry as well as the Lloyd & Margaret Cooley Memorial Undergraduate Summer Research Scholarship in Analytical Chemistry in honour of her family and the role that chemistry has played therein. Similarly, the Donald R. Arnold Scholarship for graduate students honours a leader in photochemistry – Don's son is corresponding author of an article. Although space prevents me from mentioning all the ways that friends of the Department support our students, attention is drawn to the Dr. Kenneth Leffek Prize, the Kenneth & Dorothy Hayes Memorial Prize and the John Carstairs Arnell Prize as the growth of these endowments enables us to recognize students' excellence as well as honour influential teachers and alumni. Two new prizes deserve special mention as both were initiated by students in support of each other. Indeed, the Chemistry Graduate Student Seminar Prize is awarded by graduate students for the best student Departmental presentation.

Similarly, the Spirit of Chemistry Prize benefits undergraduates who promote the subject through activities that support peers, the chemistry community and the inspiration of youth.

Longstanding support of research programs is much appreciated. For example, the Carl C. Coffin Lectureship enables alumni to talk with trainees about their career achievements and the role of chemistry therein. The Walter J. Chute Distinguished Lectureship brings leading chemists to Dalhousie, including several Nobel Prize winners. This year we will welcome Professor Sir Shankar Balasubramanian FMedSci FRS, from the University of Cambridge, to talk about his inventions that helped to make human gene sequencing a routine possibility. Other supports reward current faculty members courtesy of insight long ago. The Alexander McLeod Professor of Chemistry, possibly the oldest named professorship in chemistry in Canada, was created in 1884 in accordance with a bequest from Alexander McLeod, a prominent Halifax businessman. The honour is currently bestowed on Mark Stradiotto (see his article herein) following on from Don Arnold (see above) and Russ Boyd (whose historical perspective was invaluable to me in writing this preface). A short mention of the Harry Shirreff Professor of Chemical Research further demonstrates the strength of the Dal Chemistry community. Early recipients were Carl C. Coffin, Walter J. Chute and Osvald Knop, all of whom are now honoured in their own right. Neil Burford received this professorship, as did Axel Becke whose contributions to theoretical chemistry and density functional theory (DFT) have revolutionized the ability to predict chemical and physical properties. Mary Anne White (article herein) is emerita Harry Shirreff Professor of Chemical Research. A discussion of honours would be incomplete without recognition of the Killam Trusts, of which Dalhousie is the largest single recipient. Many co-authors of this special issue have benefitted from Killam chairs, prizes and scholarships.

We unite with our students, alumni, friends and colleagues to recognize that in 2018 we stand on the shoulders and achievements of our forbearers. We appreciate the value that inclusivity and diversity bring to our everyday actions and our long-term aspirations, and we are mindful of our responsibility in maintaining the strong Dalhousie Chemistry reputation. In reading this issue, alumni will perhaps be reminded of their own Dal stories – please get in touch, let's share them!

Alison Thompson
guest editor of the special issue



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