

To Professor Heinrich Nöth on the Occasion of his 85th Birthday



Professor Heinrich Nöth has served as a member of the Advisory Board of *Zeitschrift für Naturforschung B – A Journal of Chemical Sciences* for more than half of a century. Ever since he had become affiliated with this periodical, he also was one of its illustrious contributors. He continued the tradition of his famous colleagues *Egon Wiberg*, *Ernst Otto Fischer* and *Wolfgang Beck* and published many of his most important papers in *ZfN-B* making it one of the most respected German chemistry journals of the post-World War II decades. The publisher and the editors therefore honour him on the occasion of his 85th birthday by presenting to him this dedicated issue loaded to the rim with contributions of present- and past-time colleagues at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität and Technische Universität both in Munich, of former students and of some of his many friends in the scientific community.

Heinz Nöth was born in Munich on June 20, 1928 into the family of the solo hornist of the orchestra of the Bavarian State Opera. Although he was gifted with considerable talent in music and considered a career in the family tradition, after finishing his gymnasium education in the post-war years he chose chemistry as the professional passion of his life. He received the Diploma and Dr. rer. nat. degrees (with Egon Wiberg) at LMU in 1952 and 1954, respectively. Working initially on hydrides of the group III elements he soon

became a master in boron chemistry, which was his main focus in research for many years and finally led – after a post-doctoral year with ICI in the UK – to his Habilitation in 1962. Already in 1966 he was offered a prestigious Chair of Inorganic Chemistry at Philipps-Universität Marburg, where he followed Max Schmidt and was in charge of building up new departmental structures on a new campus. He soon attracted a large number of students and started building up his academic school which later populated many of the chemistry chairs and top industrial positions in Germany. In 1969 he returned to Munich into Egon Wiberg's chair which in spite of several tempting offers he would not leave again until his retirement in 1996. With boron chemistry never neglected, his research interests spread out over the years into other areas, where he also made many important contributions which appear now in textbooks. He was an impressive teacher and loved lecture demonstrations in front of the huge audiences at LMU. In sabbaticals he spent time at many institutions abroad, in particular as an adjunct professor in Mexico.

In his long career, Heinz Nöth has trained more than 150 doctorate students and published close to 850 papers. He served in many influential positions in university administration and in state and federal funding organizations like the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, and he was a long-term consultant to the

chemical industry. His personality, his organizational talents and his ability to bring harmony into groups with divergent interests led to his many appointments in science institutions. He was elected President of the German Chemical Society (GDCh) and stayed two periods in office in the years between 1988 and 1993. This service was followed by the Presidency of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences, where he again was at the helm for six years (1998–2005). In 1991 he was awarded membership of the Maximiliansorden für Wissenschaft und Kunst, the highest science decoration in the State of Bavaria, and became the speaker of its members for several years. These positions filled the early years of his “retirement”, before he was able to return full-time again to his office at LMU where he continues to write up papers and to solve crystal structures for the fun of it.

Heinz Nöth received many honours: He was elected to several academies, including Leopoldina German Academy of Sciences, Acatech Deutsche Akademie der Technikwissenschaften, Academia Europaea, Russian Academy of Sciences, Austrian Academy of Sci-

ences, and Göttingen Academy of Sciences. Honorary memberships of the GDCh, of the Royal Society of Chemistry (London), and of The Austrian Chemical Society, Vienna, reflect the international reputation. He holds honorary doctorates from Philipps-Universität Marburg and from the University of Leeds (UK). He was awarded the Alfred Stock memorial medal of the GDCh and – to close the circle after more than half a century in boron chemistry – the Boron of the Americas medal of the Society of Boron Chemists.

At his 85th birthday, his colleagues and friends, and in particular those who have contributed to this special issue of ZfN-B, thank Heinz Nöth for his commitment to science, for his leadership at the frontiers of chemistry research and education, and for his warm friendship.

With best wishes: Ad multos annos!

Hubert Schmidbaur, Rainer Pöttgen, Gerhard Maas, Thomas Lindel, Annette Schier, Gerhard Müller, and Tamina Greifeld