



SPIE's 40th Anniversary

Yes indeed, SPIE—The International Society for Optical Engineering—was founded 40 years ago this year. As the official records show, it was “on July 1, 1955 that some 50 persons met at The House of Murphy restaurant on Ventura Boulevard in Studio City, California, to begin the formation of a new society which was soon to become SPIE.” I refer the reader to the booklet published in July 1995 entitled “SPIE's 40th Anniversary: Forty years of helping the optical community turn technology into reality.” There is also an interesting video that has been put together that chronicles the early years of the society.

Naturally, SPIE's International Symposium on Optical Science, Engineering, and Instrumentation celebrated this 40th anniversary with an outstanding meeting in San Diego. Some 5750 people attended the 61 topical technical conferences, the 86 educational courses, and the three-day exhibit with more than 1100 exhibitors. It was my great personal privilege to be the chair of this 1995 anniversary symposium. This is the largest San Diego symposium since 1992.

Special events at the meeting outside the technical program involved a number of social occasions highlighted by the 40th Annual Awards Banquet and Dinner Dance, at which time I had the honor of welcoming the diners and introducing Jack Gaskill, 1995 President of SPIE, who, with the help of President-Elect Henri Arsenault, presented the awards to a group of very deserving students, scientists, and engineers. Included in that awards ceremony was the presentation of the Kingslake Medal and Prize to Jose Sasian for his paper in *Optical Engineering* that was judged the best paper of the journal year 1994 (see my last editorial for the details).

On the occasion of this very special awards banquet, I wore a tie that I had received in England in 1993, when I had

the good fortune to attend the celebration of the 800th anniversary of the founding of the City of Lancaster. The tie has the city coat-of-arms and underneath it is written “1183–1993.” I thought that it would keep us all humble and thinking about the future, since SPIE is still a very young 40 years old.

Another special event was the Members and Founders Reception that was followed by the Quarter Century Anniversary Dinner for all members who have been in the society for 25 years or more. A great evening was had by all. I certainly was not a founder but have been involved with the society since 1963.

The Annual Meeting has been held in San Diego for the last 22 years. All participants enjoy San Diego as a location for our meeting, since there is so much to enjoy in the finite and rather limited spare time that a busy technical program and exhibit allow. As you may have already heard, we have been forced to relocate our meeting for the 41st International Symposium because of a national political convention. The City of Denver will be our host next year from August 4th to 9th.

Editor's Anecdote

This is really a symposium chair's anecdote. I was walking through the registration area on Monday morning when one of the local red-jacketed attendants stopped me and said “It is you, isn't it?” Before I could think of a quick rejoinder and a “yes, it is me, myself, and I,” he opened up the technical program, pointed to my photograph, and said “yes, it is!”

Brian J. Thompson
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