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As research professor at the College of Environmental Science and Forestry for the past 25 years, Michael Szwarc has had a free hand pursuing his great love: chemical research. When he announced his retirement from the College few believed that his very productive scientific career had come to an end. His ideas are still fresh and provocative; there is still that keen perception of the problem, its careful analysis, the subsequent elegant design of experimental procedures to solve the problem, and the excitement when the solution is found and communicated to others.

Being an excellent experimentalist, Michael Szwarc always had a knack of coming up with systems that would yield the maximum amount of return for the work done, avoiding confusing complexities that would render data interpretation more difficult. Examples of this are his early work on bond dissociation energies using the elegant toluene carrier technique and his extensive investigations on radical addition and abstraction reactions. The work that truly electrified chemists, especially those in the polymer field, was his studies on electron transfer-initiated polymerization of monomers leading to living polymers. He quickly realized the implications of these findings: the possibility of synthesizing narrow molecular weight polymers as well as tailor-made block and graft copolymers. Those who worked with Michael Szwarc during the living polymers "era" still remember his excitement as he peered with sparkling eyes into the vacuum tubes of living polymers, watching the colors come and go as newly added monomers were devoured by the evergrowing and hungry living ends. Such were the emotions that a new quasi-scientific terminology was created.

Shouts of "let's kill the living polymers" or "I just resurrected a dead polymer" or signs like "feeding of living polymers only permitted by management" could be heard and seen. The studies, important from both an academic as well as industrial point of view, stimulated investigators in laboratories throughout the world to study the properties of the new products.

The career-long interest of Michael Szwarc in the mechanisms of chemical reactions led him from the living polymer work into his still ongoing studies on the behavior of ionic solutions in low polarity media. His many and original contributions to an understanding of the fundamental processes underlying the often complex character of ionic processes in these solvents become obvious on reading the two volumes Ions and Ion Pairs in Organic Reactions which he edited. Through the application of various techniques, Michael Szwarc and his coworkers have provided us with a wealth of information on ion pair reactions that has ramifications in many branches of chemistry.

At an age when most people call it quits, Michael Szwarc has not given us a hint that he will. He still gets a kick out of learning new things. His footsteps in the laboratory are still quicker than those of his younger colleagues, and his face still is the best barometer as to whether an experiment worked or failed. There is never a dull moment being around Michael Szwarc. Those who have had the privilege of working with him have greatly benefited from his enthusiasm for scientific research, his skill as an experimentalist, his broad knowledge and understanding of chemical phenomena and his willingness to communicate his discoveries and insights to all who wanted to listen. For this we are deeply grateful to him.

Johannes Smid