

*As the Presidents See It ...*

## A Fledgling Year

### *King-Ning Tu, 1981 MRS President*

When I think back to the early 80s and my involvement with MRS, I feel a special sense of pride in the Society, particularly toward the people with whom I worked at that time. In 1981, Clyde Northrup was vice president, Kathy Taylor was treasurer, and Harry Leamy and Woody White were program co-chairs. Other capable and dedicated people also contributed their talents to MRS; for example, Elton Kaufmann chaired the Corporate Participation Committee. I single out the above people because they all later became MRS presidents! In 1981, the future leadership of MRS was already in place. And it was from this group of people that I enjoyed the best support—they made things happen.

1981 was one of MRS's early formative years. The Society was still very young, but showed all the signs of potential rapid growth. Behind that aspect of growth, however, there was no formal organization, no headquarters, and no logo. Ernest Hawk of Penn State University served as a part-time secretary, and Aram Tarpinian of the Army Materials and Mechanics Research Center (Watertown, Massachusetts) was our part-time financial officer. Aram's main job was taking care of the logistics of the Fall Meeting in Boston. This effort was a more-or-less one-man show.

As president, I was in charge of almost everything else and, from time to time, was required to be an entrepreneur. MRS was my "business." I could produce as much as I wanted, but with no budget! I recall that in mid-1981 we were in the red, and had to wait for the Fall Meeting registration fees to come in to balance our books. On the other hand, our 1981 registration attendance broke the 1,000 mark, due to the outstanding effort of the program and symposium chairs.

Several things that occurred in 1981 deserve special mention. MRS proceedings were launched with the signing of a contract with Elsevier North Holland. I clearly remember my meeting in New York City with Charles Ellis, president of Elsevier North Holland—he was more enthusiastic about the deal than I was. Although our program co-chairs were confident about the high quality of the proceedings and were sure that they would sell well, I was a bit wary about

committing MRS to buy a minimum number of copies from Elsevier. There was no reserved fund for it. It is now history that our contract with Elsevier was for three years only and that the MRS Proceedings program has been successful, the number of volumes having quickly reached three digits.

In 1981, MRS also initiated the Corporate Sponsors (now Corporate Affiliates) group. This group was formed to ensure a close technical liaison with leading industrial research and development centers and to broaden support for expanding MRS activities. Rudie Voorhoeve and Elton Kaufmann led the Corporate Sponsors drive, with the emphatic support of W.O. Baker of AT&T Bell Laboratories. Baker sent me a long letter to assist our effort in soliciting members. Since that time, Corporate Affiliates have been a major provider of funding support and an invaluable source of personnel for MRS voluntary service. The group now numbers about 300.

1981 was a great year for "firsts"—it was so easy at that time to get things started. I recall Kathy Taylor promoting her Graduate Student Awards program

so it would become a regular event at the Meeting; Rustum Roy proposing his rather different lunchtime symposia that cut across subject matter covered by the topical symposia; and Alfred Yue establishing the first MRS university chapter at UCLA.

In retrospect, the dramatic growth of MRS during 1981 was not accidental. MRS at that time was a small and nimble organization that deftly straddled the rising wave of electronic materials. The MRS Meeting acquired a progressive image and its interdisciplinary symposia attracted a broad spectrum of attendees, including significant numbers of overseas scientists and professionals. But MRS was also experiencing "growing pains." The Society needed to be run in a more businesslike manner and needed the support of a regular staff. By the end of my term, the undercurrents of our transition to a fully organized and staffed society was being felt.

I am fortunate to have been closely associated with MRS during its fledgling years and to have worked with so many truly outstanding people. It has been one of my most rewarding experiences. Today I am still excited about organizing an MRS symposium and attending the MRS Meetings.

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## Early MRS Success Stimulated by Integrated Circuit Industry

*J.M. Poate, 1980 MRS President*

One positive aspect of this series of articles is that it demonstrates that we MRS veterans are still alive and kicking. This attests either to the perennial youthfulness of MRS and its officers or to the fact that wiser, older heads have never bothered to take over the reins of the Society—I prefer the first explanation.

The comments of my fellow former presidents make good reading for MRS devotees, but I will take a different tack and try not to spend too long reminiscing. Rather, I would like to address some scientific and technological issues which have shaped the Society. I wish to discuss two related issues: Why has the So-

ciety been so phenomenally successful during its first 20 years? and, What does the future hold?

I believe that the success of MRS has hinged on two issues. First, the enormous growth of the Si integrated circuit industry in the 1970s and 1980s provided an unprecedented stimulus for the study of electronic materials at the submicron and atomic levels. But why did MRS—and not one of the more established societies such as the American Physical Society or the Electrochemical Society—capture this field? The answer probably lies in the simple fact that the older and large societies could not respond quickly