Preface

A symposium, *Chemicals and Materials from Renewable Resources,* was held at the 218th National Meeting of the American Chemical Society in New Orleans, Louisiana, from August 22 to August 26, 1999. This book contains a collection of some of the papers presented during the 1.5 days of the symposium.

Each new oil crisis seems to bring a rediscovery of the renewable to chemicals field. Yet the work in this area remains very diverse, making it difficult to present a coherent front to those who might fund new efforts in basic and applied research. In organizing the symposium, we were faced with a similar problem: Do we focus on a single narrow topic or present a broader sample of several aspects of the field? We eventually chose a middle road on a basis of an idea, which is described more fully in Chapter 1, that our understanding of how one can selectively manipulate renewable feedstocks requires (1) a broader range of renewables-based building blocks and (2) a much greater understanding of how transformations of those building blocks can be controlled at a molecular level. It is our hope that this sampling of different research efforts will stimulate a broader interest in this field and will promote better communication among those groups working in related areas.

At this writing, the price of crude oil is again on the rise and the American public is facing sharply higher gasoline prices. The United States possesses a vast amount of renewable and sustainable feedstocks that could supply a significant proportion of our chemical needs while not sacrificing our supply of necessary food, feed, and fiber requirements. Perhaps these chapters will serve to catalyze a much broader research effort in this fascinating field.

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