

Herman Skolnik Award and the *Journal*

On several occasions,^{1,2} as the Archivist/Historian of the ACS Division of Chemical Information (CINF), I highlighted the symbiotic relationship between the *Journal of Chemical Information and Computer Sciences* and the Division.

George W. A. (Bill) Milne, the third Editor of the *Journal* (since 1989), and Stephen R. Heller, its Associate Editor for Software Review (since 1987), have just been awarded the 2000 Herman Skolnik Award of the ACS Division of Chemical Information at the 220th ACS National Meeting in Washington on August 22, 2000.

Since Herman Skolnik (1914–1994)³ was the founder and the first Editor of the *Journal*, it is fitting to review on this occasion the history of the *Journal* and of the Award and the continuing cordial and cooperative relationship between the *Journal* and the Division.

When the Division was formed in 1948, it had no medium for publication of the papers presented at its technical meetings. As early as in 1952, the Divisional Executive Committee discussed the possibility of the ACS publishing a new self-supporting journal in the field then known as “chemical documentation”. A Divisional Journal Study Committee, formed in 1957 under the chairmanship of Herman Skolnik, recommended that such a new journal be established. The ACS approved the recommendation and authorized the publication of the *Journal of Chemical Documentation* in 1961 and appointed Herman Skolnik as its Editor.

Although the *Journal* has never been formally pronounced as the official organ of the Division and the Division has never attempted to influence the Editor’s publication policies, very close ties have always existed between the Division and the *Journal*’s Editors. Prominent and active members of the Division have served on the *Journal*’s Advisory Boards, and the Division continues to encourage speakers at the Divisional symposia to submit the papers for publication in the *Journal*.

In 1985, when the *Journal* published its Silver Anniversary Issue, Tom Isenhour, its second editor, wrote in his editorial⁴

“This issue cannot be published without reminding the readers that the tireless efforts of Herman Skolnik caused the *Journal* to be created and developed through its 21.5 years.”

Herman himself published a 25-year perspective⁵ in that Issue, describing the *Journal*’s origin, an early change of the papers’ origin from chemical industry to predominantly academic and government institutions, the growth of international participation, and the extension of coverage to computer sciences with an accompanying change of the title to the *Journal of Chemical Information and Computer Sciences* in 1975.

More recently, under Bill Milne’s editorship, the coverage was officially extended to include chemical computation and molecular modeling, as reflected in specially created sections under those titles, and in appointing experts in these areas as Associate Editors. Computer software reviews and book reviews continue to be an integral part of the *Journal*’s coverage.

In 1976, in honor of the first recipient, the Division established the Herman Skolnik Award to recognize outstanding contributions to and achievements in the theory and practice of chemical information science. It was not a coincidence that the first Award was given at the ACS Centennial Meeting in New York. It was fitting, at the time of celebrating the 100th anniversary of founding the ACS, to recognize chemical information as one of the integral functions of the Society.

Herman himself remarked in an editorial⁶ that

“With the advent of the Award, chemical information science has achieved the final mark of maturity: a continuing tradition of responsible authorities. When we honor a member of our discipline, we honor the discipline.”

The Award soon became international. Among the 26 winners of the Award between 1976 and 2000, there are 11 non-U.S. scientists.

What else do Bill Milne and Steve Heller have in common with the *Journal*?

Historians always look for a milestone or a “first”. Steve Heller published a paper⁷ in the *Journal* as early as in 1971 on an experimental CBAC search system. His next paper⁸

on an application of interactive computing was published in 1972, followed by three more papers in the same volume.

A joint paper⁹ by Bill and Steve on a mass spectral search system was published in 1973. Another paper¹⁰ by Bill and Steve on quality control of chemical databases was published in 1976 in Issue 4 of Volume 16. It is the historian's delight to find a kind of uncanny coincidence that this paper was published in the same issue as Herman's editorial,⁶ announcing the Award, as well as his Award address¹¹ on milestones in chemical information science, as it evolved up to 1976. Thus, as far back as 1976, the three names, Skolnik, Milne, and Heller, had two common links, the *Journal* and the Award.

The Division congratulates Bill and Steve and wishes them further successes in their professional achievements.

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