

Heinz Hoffmann - A Life of Passion for Colloid Science

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Heinz Hoffmann was one of the “founding fathers” of ECIS, instrumental for bringing this organisation and conference into life in the second half of the 1980’s and dedicated to it until the end of his life. At the time of the foundation of ECIS, he had already established himself as an eminent scientist in the field of colloid science with a particular focus on surfactant science. Early on in his career he had realised that international cooperation is a central key in advancing science, especially in such a rather interdisciplinary field as colloid science, which was one of the driving motives for getting ECIS started.

Heinz Hoffmann started his research career in the field of electrochemistry and then ventured into the newly developing field of studying fast reaction kinetics. Some time later he applied this methodology to the investigation of micellar systems and the interesting findings of these experiments brought him into the field of colloid science. Once he had arrived here, he discovered the multitude of interesting phenomena seen in colloidal systems and devoted the rest of his research life to the investigation of a large number of different questions from the field of colloid science. In his research he liked to focus on fundamental questions but then was also interested into bringing these fundamental insights to the more practical and applied aspects of colloid science. In this lecture we want to have a look at the personality of Heinz Hoffmann, which means on one side on the highlights of his research work and his contributions to our understanding of colloidal systems but on the other side also on the personality behind it, as almost always a good researcher is connected with being an interesting human being. This talk will not be able to cover all the various scientific exploits of Heinz Hoffmann in a comprehensive way but instead will focus on highlighting some of his most important findings, his contributions to ECIS and the personality behind it. In this way we will not only honour a well-deserving scientist from our community but hopefully also give some inspiration to the generations of scientist that come after him.

Keywords:

ECIS, surfactants, self-assembly, rheology



Photo of Heinz Hoffmann in his office