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NEWS

DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AWARD

DR. PAUL F. KERR received the Distinguished Member Award at the Annual Clay Minerals Conference at Miami, Florida, October 16, 1970. The following is part of a citation read by Thomas F. Bates, Vice President of Pennsylvania State University:

"Paul Francis Kerr was born in 1897 in Hemet, California. He attended Occidental College and began graduate work in Mining Engineering at Stanford in 1919. There under the influence of Austin F. Rogers and working with Professor D. L. Webster in the Physics Department he helped build an X-ray diffraction unit; and, just 5 years after the initial work of Debye and Scherrer, and of Hull on power diffraction, he applied the new technique to the study of opaque ore minerals.

1924 was an eventful year for Paul in that he accepted a temporary position for the Spring term at Columbia, returned to California in the Summer to get married to Helen Squire of Palo Alto, and returned to Columbia in the Fall. This year set not only the place but the pattern: he has remained at Columbia for 46 years but has been an almost constant commuter to the West for a great part of his field study and research. In these 46 years his record has been tremendous.

Between 1924 and 1965, 113 students did their graduate research in Mineralogy at Columbia, in whole or in large part under Paul's guidance. Well over half of these are listed in American Men of Science. The written record, again as of 1965, shows 226 publications characterized singly by a thorough and detailed study of the subject at hand, and all together by a fascinating display of wide ranging knowledge on a variety of subjects: 52 on uranium mineralization, 37 on clays, 22 on alteration studies, 23 on investigative techniques and their application, 12 on tungsten mineralization, 10 on gems and gemology. And so the record goes.

As an early investigator in X-ray diffraction using powder techniques the application to the fine grained clays was a natural. Few here tonight have the first hand knowledge possessed by our Award Winner of the degree of confusion over 40 years ago when the number of clay mineral names ran a close second to the number of specimens collected. It was fortunate, indeed, that the two most powerful techniques then available for the investigation of minerals was sharply focused upon these fine-grained materials by two men, Ross and Kerr, who were not only most qualified to effectively use the techniques, but had backgrounds oriented to the essential knowledge of occurrence, mineral association, and genetic characteristics so important to the proper interpretation of laboratory results.

By 1940, Paul Kerr had published 16 papers on clay including that given as the Edward Orton, Jr. Memorial Lecture in 1938 on "A decade of research on the nature of clay".

With the passage of another 10 years he had become a recognized expert on Brazilian quartz; tungsten mineralization; Katanga, Great Bear Lake, and Colorado Plateau uranium; problems of international inspection of radioactive mineral production; and was filling in his spare time producing a dozen more papers on clay. Most important to all of us assembled here, however, was the production, at the end of the fifties, of the landmark American Petroleum Institute Project 49 volume entitled "Clay Mineral Standards".

15 years later, in 1965, Kerr retired from his position at Columbia. With an average production during this period of 9·6 papers per year there is little point in trying to summarize the diverse contributions in many mineralogical fields. 22 of these papers are on clay, many setting a pattern for studies of alteration that will long be recognized for the detailed empirical work and lucid explanations that mark all of Kerr's contributions to his science.

In concluding this all too brief recap of this man's *first* fifty years in the profession, it is of particular interest to look at the record from 1965 to 1970. In these five years, *after* retirement, he has produced 20 papers and has guided some half-dozen more students to completion of their degrees. He has accelerated work on quick clays begun in the early Sixties until he can now add this as another area in which his international expertise is readily acknowledged. He has research contracts still in force with the Air Force and the AEC, and is consulting for several companies. If this is "retirement" it is certainly a different variety from the usual version. But then, who expects the usual from Paul Kerr?

It is with great pleasure that I present to you, Mr. President, for the third Distinguished Member Award, Professor Paul Francis Kerr."

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