

PREFACE

This volume is based on an international symposium held during September 9-12, 1986 in Bocca di Magra, Italy. The intent of the organizers was to bring together expert practitioners of fluorescence spectroscopy, particularly as applied to biological systems, to assess recent developments in the field and discuss future directions. At the same time the meeting was intended to honor the singular and outstanding scientific career of Gregorio Weber on the occasion of his seventieth birthday.

Gregorio Weber is truly the pioneer in the application of fluorescence methods to biochemistry and biophysics. A complete list of his scientific contributions to fluorescence and to protein biochemistry is beyond the scope of this preface. Suffice it to say that since his initial landmark articles on fluorescence, published in the late 1940's and early 1950's, Gregorio Weber has continued to make seminal contributions to both the theory and practice of fluorescence and, contrary to many who might be tempted to rest on their laurels, he shows no signs of slackening his pace.

In addition to his more obvious tangible contributions to the scientific field, Gregorio Weber has made equally valuable contributions of another type. Specifically, he has had the most profound impact, both professionally and personally, on generations of young scientists. To paraphrase and extend an observation made by Dr. Brand in his lecture, Gregorio Weber has consistently shown by example how scientists ought to interact with each other, namely with courtesy, respect, selflessness, good humor and generosity. All of us privileged to have known and worked with "The Professor" will always be grateful for the experience.

The organizing committee, which consisted of N. Acerbi, A. Finazzi-Agro, E. Gratton, D. M. Jameson, G. Motolese, R. A. Ricci and N. Rosato,

wishes to thank all those involved and acknowledge the financial support generously provided by I.S.S., Inc., SLM Instruments Inc., Abbott Laboratories, Perkin-Elmer, LTD, Fluorescence Unlimited and Molecular Probes. The Italian C.N.R. also provided generous financial assistance.

Special thanks are due to Alessandro Finazzi-Agro and Nicola Rosato who coordinated local arrangements with Monastero Santa Croce, the meeting site, and to Franco Bassani who contributed greatly to the initial meeting organization and also generously provided excellent wine from his own vineyard for each participant. We also thank R. A. Ricci, President of the Italian Physical Society for the opening remarks. The chairmen of the various sessions, including S. Lehrer, R. A. Ricci, G. Hervé, M. Eftink, A. Szabo and R. Gennis, are gratefully acknowledged.

The meeting could not have succeeded without the special efforts of Amedeo Lia and Guido Motolese who made generous contributions, not only financially, but also of their time and expertise to many of the logistical and social arrangements, including the dinner banquet. We are also indebted to the many individuals who assisted so expertly in the numerous secretarial, organizational and transportational tasks including Frederica Scaraglio, Glauco Bionducci, Marco Bassani, Claudio Furno, Francesco Giovannani, Alessandro Carrozzi and Mrs. Nicotra.

Ms. Vickey Thomas is most gratefully acknowledged for her assistance in many stages of this meeting ranging from early preparations to manuscript proofreading. We also thank Ms. Mary Born from Plenum Press for her numerous helpful suggestions. Finally, we thank, most sincerely, Ms. Jo Hicks for her virtually heroic efforts in retyping all the manuscripts and tolerating the idiosyncracies of the book editors.

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