

## Celebrating 25 Years of Dioxin Conferences

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Looking back over all these years of successful conferences there are some thoughts that stand out. This conference series is unique in several important points. They have always had a strong scientific content produced by the dedicated experts in the field who repeatedly have come and contributed their work each year. Giants in the field have passed through the halls of these conferences. Many of you may remember Cris Rappe of Sweden, known as "Mr. Dioxin" and Ludwig Stieglitz who originated the de novo concept of dioxin formation. But, in addition, the conferences have provided a forum for developing continuing friendships, both personal and professional, that we seldom find in scientific conferences. Part of this is due to the number of the attendees which, at around 1000, is of a size that encourages close contact with colleagues, not only during the paper presentation but during the delightful receptions and dinners. Another factor is the opportunities we have had to see other cultures by organizing the conferences in a different country each year. There are many cities in these countries that we have seen first hand now. To recall a few, we have had a chance to feel the spirit and customs of Japan in both Kyoto and Fukuoka, to see the cities of Canada at Edmond and Toronto, Scandinavia at Stockholm and Umea, Germany at Bayreuth and Berlin, The Netherlands at Amsterdam, the USA at Monterey at the California coast and Boston on the Atlantic coast, Korea at the beautiful resort hotel far from Seoul, Spain at Barcelona, Italy at Venice and Rome, and Finland at Tampere. These are enriching experiences and add to the spirit of our scientific discussions and our lives.

The success of these conferences is due in large part to the vision and dedication of one man, Otto Hutzinger. It was he who conceived and organized the International Advisory Board which provides continuity to the series by choosing the future sites of the conferences and passing on the experience of past chairmen to the future chairmen. The IAB constantly tries to improve the content and conduct of the conferences. Although the series began with a focus on dioxins and their effects, the IAB broadened the scope as the years went by to include other related topics, like the persistent organic pollutants (POPS). The IAB is composed of a core group of original members and adds past chairmen and future chairmen to their meetings which are held twice during each conference. Otto Hutzinger chaired these meetings until a few years ago when he turned that duty over to Heidi Fiedler and Mike Dennison as co-chairs. The foundation he laid has endured to ensure success for the future from which we, each and everyone benefit.

None of the conferences would be successful were it not for hard work of the chairmen who have volunteered to organize and conduct the meeting in their respective countries. To all of these people, our colleagues, we owe a debt of gratitude. They have contributed immeasurably to our professional and personal lives with these annual conferences.