

Editorial

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The 13th International Workshop on Sol–Gel Science and Technology (Sol–Gel 2005) was held at the University of California, Los Angeles (USA) from 21–26 August 2005, continuing a tradition extending back to the first workshop in Padova in 1981. This conference has been widely recognized as the premier conference in the sol-gel materials field. Special thanks are due to the Organizing Committee, Dr. Eric Bescher, Prof. Bruce Dunn, Prof. Doug Mackenzie and Prof. Jeff Zink for their tireless efforts in producing this world-class event, that has attracted around 300 delegates from 30 different countries. Four keynote and eighteen invited speakers provided a compelling overview of the directions in which sol–gel science and technology is now evolving.

For the first time, the new International Sol-Gel Society (ISGS (<http://www.isgs.org/>)) took an active role in the conference organization. ISGS was responsible for the Ulrich awards selection, which have been given to three outstanding young scientists: Dr. Nicola Hüsing (University of Ulm, Germany), Dr. David Grosso (University of Paris, France)

and Dr. Jorg Puetz (INM, Saarbruecken, Germany). The local organizing committee has awarded Prof. Helmut Schmidt for his extremely active role in the promotion of sol-gel science and technology.

Since 2005, the Journal of Sol-Gel Science and Technology is the official ISGS journal; the board of the ISGS has decided to publish this special issue to give an overview of the contributions presented at the Sol-Gel 2005 conference in the following topics: Chemistry and characterization – Hybrids and biological materials – Nanomaterials and thin films – Aerogels – Optics.

The 2005 meeting was the last in the series of the Workshops. With the establishment of ISGS, our bi-annual meeting changes its name (and some of its characteristics), and the next one will be Sol-Gel 2007, the XIV International Sol-Gel Conference, to be held in Montpellier, France, from 2–7 September 2007 (<http://www.enscm.fr/sol-gel2007.htm>). We are waiting for you to join us for a very enjoyable and stimulating conference.