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A NOTE OF SPECIAL THANKS

For the last six years, I had the opportunity, and indeed the privilege, of serving the Society of Wood Science Technology (SWST) as Editor of *Wood and Fiber Science*. At the outset, it was somewhat scary to step into the role as Editor following such great former editors as Dr. Robert Youngs, Dr. John Siau, Dr. Al McGinnes, Dr. Arno Schniewind, Dr. Ben Jayne, and a number of others for whom I have had the highest regard as individuals and scientists. Our Society is a volunteer organization whose members are doing most of the work. The journal is also published and administered mostly by volunteers. The Editor, the Associate Editor, SWST Committee members, and all the reviewers are contributing their time and expertise to maintain the high professional and scientific standards of this publication.

The most enjoyable part of my job as editor was the receipt, reading, and handling of many very well written manuscripts based on the results of sound research projects in so highly varying subject areas. At the beginning, the variation in the subjects was overwhelming, ranging from engineering to chemistry, from processing to simulations, from solid wood products to composite materials, and from theoretical modeling to marketing. More than 700 manuscripts were received during my tenure as editor. However, the several hundred reviewers for the manuscripts had just as much variation in their expertise, and their help was very much appreciated.

First, I would like to focus on the evolution of *Wood and Fiber Science* during my tenure as Editor. When I took over in 2001, practically all manuscripts were submitted by mail in the form

of hard copies. As a consequence most, if not all, reviews were done on those hard copies which, of course, took a relatively long time considering that the Editor who, in turn, forwarded them again by mail to the authors for revisions. Finally, the revised papers had to be mailed again to the Editor for final acceptance. Despite this awkward procedure, most manuscripts could be published within 18 months from the date of submission, a relatively long time considering the fast development of scientific knowledge in these days. Some papers may have become somewhat obsolete by the time they appeared in print. Improvements were made when a new electronic database was created by the then Associate Editor, Dr. Earl Kline, making it easier to monitor the status of manuscripts.

Around the midpoint of my tenure as Editor, we changed the procedure for submitting manuscripts by allowing and encouraging authors to send their papers electronically. Over a period of about three years, most of the manuscripts came in electronic form, but many were still sent by mail in hard copies. Some authors, especially those in some developing countries, did not yet have either access or skills to send their manuscripts by e-mail. Thus, I decided to retain the dual form of submitting papers. However, full electronic management of manuscripts must be created in the future to reduce lagtime between submission and publication.

One of the major developments during the last year of my tenure was when *Wood and Fiber Science* joined the electronic world. All 39 volumes of the journal are now available through a searchable database accessible on the SWST home site. Members of the Society receive the

access free of extra charge as a new membership benefit, while non-members can access the abstracts free and may opt to purchase whole articles for a modest fee. Several SWST members were involved in the creation of the electronic access project, all as volunteers. The Publication Policy Committee of the Society spearheaded this effort.

A special thank you must be extended to the Department of Wood Science and Forest Products of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University for providing the Editors, Dr. Siau, Dr. Youngs and me with office, telephone and fax services, secretarial and office help, and mail service for over 16 years with no charge to

SWST. I also wish to express my gratitude to the Executive Boards of SWST for their continuing support and to Executive Director, Ms. Victoria Herian, and to Editorial Assistant, Ms. Carol Ovens, for their professional assistance.

I am convinced that during the years to come *Wood and Fiber Science* will continue to maintain its status as one of the leading scientific journals in the wood science and forest products field.

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