



A Tribute to Professor Richard J. Puddephatt on the Occasion of his 75th Birthday



Richard J. Puddephatt

It is a great pleasure and privilege to be guest editor for this special issue dedicated to Professor Richard J. Puddephatt. We are pleased to dedicate this special issue, entitled "Activation and Transformations of Molecules by the Platinum Group Metals" to Professor Puddephatt in honor of his 75th birthday. Richard (Dick) Puddephatt is world-renowned for his work in the area of organometallic and coordination chemistry of the platinum group metals, including bond activation reactions. Dick published his first paper, which discussed Pb/O bond addition reactions, more than fifty years ago. Shortly thereafter he transitioned into his work with organometallic platinum and gold compounds, including the study of fundamental reaction mechanisms, bond activation, cluster chemistry, and polymer science, and to this day he remains active in teaching and research in these diverse areas.

Dick completed his graduate studies at University College, London and then did postdoctoral research at The University of Western Ontario (Canada). Subsequently, he returned to England and held a position as lecturer at The University of Liverpool before returning to The University of Western Ontario as Professor in 1978, where he currently holds Western's highest academic honor, the rank of Distinguished University Professor.

Dick is both prolific and preeminent. He has published over 650 peer-reviewed manuscripts and 3 books. He is highly cited, having an h-index of over 75, with over 22,000 citations from more than 10,000 citing articles. Incidentally, Dick "wrote the book" on gold chemistry many years ago and we still reference it to this day.

Deservedly so, Dick's C.V. lists many awards and accolades, both nationally in Canada, and internationally, and thus there are too many to record here. Dick's accomplishments also include being a top-notch teacher and graduate advisor. He has also won teaching awards in addition to his supervision of 57 Ph.D. students, 17 M.Sc. students, and 49 postdoctoral fellows. These former students have

taken numerous government, industry, and academic positions around the world.

I had the pleasure of being a student of Dick's many years ago and found it to be a very rewarding experience. I am able to relate some of my experience as it pertains to Dick's astute knowledge of chemistry and his keen interest in his students. To begin, Dick was a walking library (or today, a walking SciFinder!); he would spend most Friday afternoons in the library getting all his ideas and references together only to share them with his students as soon as he could. This was a great boon for graduate students in the days before SciFinder. Dick was also very available to his students. Dick would always help with spectral and data analysis. He could, with a quick glance of our notebooks or NMR spectra, resolve problems that had us stumped and confused for days. His schedule was like clockwork; he would wander through the labs at 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. shortly after his coffee break with his colleagues. This was when we, as students, would leave our spectra out on the bench for Dick's perusal and subsequently he would give us his prognosis of our research enterprise. Finally, probably his most helpful attribute for the support of his students was his knack for writing and finishing manuscripts. Dick is easily the best editor I have ever seen; he would take very rough drafts we students had prepared and Dick polished them up in no time. Work never lingered on his desk!

In addition to the excellent service to his students, Dick served on the editorial board of *Organometallics*, *Inorganic Syntheses*, *Organometallics Chemical Communications*, *Polyhedron*, *Journal of Coordination Chemistry*, *Inorganic Chemical Communications*, *Journal of Inorganic and Organometallic Polymers and Materials*, as regional editor for *Inorganica Chimica Acta*, and as editor-in-chief for *The Canadian Journal of Chemistry*.

Finally, it is well known to all that Dick's academic and research record is outstanding, but for those who know him, we are also aware that his record is only surpassed by his agreeable, kind personality. I am grateful to have been his student and I am pleased to continue to have Dick as a mentor.

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Available online 20 December 2018