

Dieter Landolt, biographical data



This picture was taken in 1975 at the Annual Meeting in Baden near Vienna and shows, from left to right, H. Gerischer, D. Landolt and C. Tobias. Tobias was President-Elect, Landolt was Secretary General and Gerischer was a Past-President.

Dieter Landolt was born in 1938 in Switzerland. He studied chemical engineering at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH) where he got his Ph.D. in 1965 for a thesis performed in the laboratory of Professor Norbert Ibl. In 1966 he joined Professor Charles Tobias's group at the Inorganic Materials Division of the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory and the Department of Chemical Engineering of the University of California Berkeley. In 1968 he was appointed Assistant Professor at the School of Engineering and Applied Science of the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). In 1972 he accepted a position as Professor of Materials Science and Engineering at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne. (EPFL). During his tenure as director of the Laboratoire de métallurgie chimique (LMCH) until his retirement in 2003 a total of forty two Ph.D. students successfully completed their thesis under his direction and a considerable number of postdoctoral researchers from many parts of the world stayed at his laboratory. His research contributions are documented in well over three hundred papers. They concern the general areas of electrochemistry, corrosion and surface chemistry of metals. Particular topics include high rate metal dissolution, electropolishing, electrochemical micromachining, alloy plating, pulse-plating, current distribution, modeling, cell design, molten salt electrolysis, surface analysis by AES, XPS and SIMS, passive oxide films and transpassive dissolution, inhibition, coatings and tribocorrosion. His scientific contributions were recognized by several honors and awards including the Castner Medal of the Society of Chemical Industry London, the AESF Scientific Achievement Award of the American Electroplater and Surface Finishers Society, the Cavallaro Medal of the European Federation of Corrosion, the Grande médaille du CEFRACOR of the Centre français de l'anticorrosion and the Research Award of the Electrodeposition Division of ECS. He is a Fellow of The Electrochemical Society and among other he served as chairman of the International Corrosion Council and of the Science and Technology Advisory Committee (STAC) of the European Federation of Corrosion.



This second picture represents Dieter Landolt at the Kyoto meeting in 1989 where, as Immediate Past-President, he was asked to give a dinner speech.

Some recollections from my terms as Secretary General and President of ISE:

My association with ISE lasts for more than thirty years. It was my privilege to serve on the Executive Committee for a total of 14 years, including a six year term as Secretary General and two years as President. At the beginning of my term as Secretary General in 1975, ISE was confronted with a number of delicate problems, some related to international politics, some related to the transformation of the French-European inspired CITCE into a truly international Society of Electrochemistry. On the political side, the Executive Committee and the membership of ISE at that time were strongly divided over how to deal with the problem of the Soviet Union preventing V. Levich and others to emigrate to Israel. The Secretary General and others were expected to mediate among divided fractions and keep the Society together. The change of CITCE into ISE created a need for By-laws that defined procedures for smoothly running the Society. This was not an easy task in view of the mentioned political tensions, but the Bylaws were finally adopted in 1980. The CITCE had three official languages, English, French and German. All official documents such as minutes were distributed in English and French (apparently English and French were somewhat "more equal" than German). After much debate at the 1975 meeting in Baden near Vienna, the Council adopted English as the only official language of ISE, against the vigorous opposition from the French representative who, by the way, argued in perfect English. The Divisional structure originally taken over from CITCE had to be adapted to the wider scope of ISE. One of the preoccupations was to keep the number of Divisions and hence that of Council members within reasonable limits and politically well balanced.

In the late eighties ISE had attained a certain degree of maturity and during my term as President (1987/88) the Executive Committee could focus mostly on improving the scientific content of Annual Meetings, which some felt depended too much on the local organizers. Another concern was how to make ISE more attractive to its members by providing more services and activities. The idea of a Business Office germinated and was officially introduced in 1990. The variety of places and cultural environments in which ISE Annual Meetings take place gives them a special charm and contributes to mutual understanding and friendship of electrochemists. During my presidential term the Annual Meeting 1987 was held in Maastricht in the same conference center, which a few years later (1991) saw the birth of the European Union in the famous Maastricht treaty. In the following year, the Annual Meeting took place at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow in somewhat simpler surroundings; I remember that the banquet was held in a tent that started to leak during a typical Scottish rain storm. At that time the Divisional structure was once more adapted to changing priorities. Over the years the role of the Division Officers in the scientific planning of the Annual Meetings has been progressively strengthened and the quality and success of Annual ISE meetings now depends primarily on their competence and dedication.