



FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ORGANIC GEOCHEMISTRY DIVISION



Keith A. Kvenvolden

The hybrid scientific discipline called organic geochemistry evolved during the early part of the 20th century from the core sciences of organic chemistry and geology, when practitioners in these two disparate fields realized that detailed information on the organic materials in sediments and rocks was of both fundamental and applied interest and importance. It has been suggested that 1930 marked the beginning of organic geochemistry (Kvenvolden 2008). In a seminal paper, Alfred Treibs (1936) demonstrated the power and elegance of

the organic geochemical approach by describing free-base and metal-complexed porphyrins in shale, oil, and coal, and by showing the important link between these compounds and their biochemical precursors found in living systems.

For thirty years organic geochemical principles were applied mainly to geological problems in the petroleum field (reviewed by Hunt et al. 2002), and most practitioners at the time were associated with the petroleum industry. In 1959, however, a meeting entitled "General Petroleum Geochemistry Symposium" was held at Fordham University in New York City, in conjunction with the 5th World Petroleum Congress. An academic sponsor of the symposium was a Fordham faculty member named Bart Nagy. Professor Nagy had a strong interest in petroleum geochemistry (see Nagy and Colombo 1967), but he also recognized the need to formally organize organic geochemistry so that workers outside the petroleum industry could be made aware of the potential of this new scientific discipline.

Thus in 1959, besides organizing a symposium, Nagy also worked with the Geochemical Society to establish an Organic Geochemistry Division (OGD), which was formally recognized in 1960 when the division participated in the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America (GSA) in Denver, Colorado. The relationship between OGD and the Geochemical Society continues to the present. To date (2010), forty individuals have served as chairperson. The names of officers of the OGD, since its inception, are listed in the table.

During the past fifty years, the OGD has intermittently sponsored sessions and symposia, commonly at GSA annual meetings, devoted to various aspects of organic geochemistry. In addition, since 1979, the OGD has been active in selecting winners of the Treibs Award for outstanding contributions to organic geochemistry. The first and only honorary recipient was Alfred Treibs. Twenty-four designated awardees have received this honor since 1979.

The year 2010 marks the 50th anniversary of OGD. During the past 50 years, the field of organic geochemistry has evolved into a widely recognized geoscience. It has contributed significantly not only to geology (petroleum formation and occurrence, hydrothermal processes, molecular [amino] stratigraphy, global emissions [seepages] of oil and gas), and biology (biogeochemistry, ecology, microbial processes) but also to other disciplines, such as atmospheric and environmental sciences, soil science, chemical and paleoceanography, hydrology, natural products chemistry, archaeology, and cosmochemistry.

TABLE 1 OGD OFFICERS 1960–2010

Term	Chairperson	Secretary
1959–1960	B. Nagy	E.G. Baker
1960–1961	H. Smith	I. Breger
1961–1962	P. Witherspoon	
1962–1963	J. Hunt	J. Vallentyne
1963–1964	R. Siever	
1964–1965	I. Breger	W. Meinschein
1965–1966	G. Erdman	
1966–1967	R. Bader	E. Hare
1967–1968	J. Vallentyne	
1968–1969	W. Meinschein	E. Bray
1969–1970	D. Spencer	
1970–1971	K. Kvenvolden	V. Swanson
1971–1972	R. Mclver	
1972–1973	P. Given	R. Mitterer
1973–1974	W. Robinson	
1974–1975	S. Silverman	Sr. M. Murphy
1975–1976	W. Sackett	
1976–1977	I. Kaplan	C. Lee
1977–1978	W. Orr	
1978–1979	C. Barker	S. Palmer
1979–1980	J. Palacas	
1980–1981	J. Winters	J. Whelan
1981–1982	T. Hoering	
1982–1983	R. Mitterer	S. Macko
1983–1984	G. Claypool	
1984–1985	J. Zumberge	S. Macko
1985–1986	R. Gagosian	
1986–1987	M. Schoell	P. Ostrom
1987–1988	J. Hayes	
1988–1989		T. Dickneider
1989–1991	P. Meyers	
1991–1993	C. Lee	J. Werne
1993–1995	J. Curiale	
1995–1997	J. Hedges	
1997–1999	M. Lewan	
1999–2001	M. Engel	
2001–2003	K. Peters	
2003–2005	M. Whiticar	
2005–2007	M. McCaffrey	
2007–2009	R. Harvey	
2009–2011	E. Canuel	

REFERENCES

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FROM THE BUSINESS OFFICE

2011 Board Elections

Online elections for the future GS treasurer and secretary positions will be held in November. Visit our website to view the slate of candidates.

Geochemical Career Center

The Geochemical Society's Geochemical Career Center is a web-based service open to the entire geochemical community, offering an easy-to-use and highly targeted resource for online employment connections.

For job seekers, the Geochemical Career Center is a free service that provides access to employers and geochemistry jobs. In addition to posting résumés, job seekers can browse and view available jobs based on their criteria and save those job notices for later review if they choose. Job seekers can also create a search agent to provide e-mail notifications of jobs that match their criteria. Employers can use the Geochemical Career Center to reach qualified candidates. For a nominal fee, employers can post job openings, search for candidate résumés based on specific job criteria, and create an online résumé agent to e-mail qualified candidates.

If you are looking for a job or have a job you want to post, come to the Geochemical Career Center at www.geochemsoc.org and click on "Career Center."

GS Events at GSA-Denver

For those attending the GSA meeting, be sure to stop at **Booth 921** to renew your GS membership and pick up a fantastic GS lapel pin (free while supplies last)!

The **GS Joint Reception** with the MSA and the GSA's new MGPV Division will be on Tuesday, November 2, 2010, from 5:45 to 7:45 pm. Tickets are \$10 for professionals and \$5 for students and may be purchased at the door (be sure to wear your fantastic GS lapel pin!).

And finally, take in Patricia Dove's **F. Earl Ingerson Lecture** titled "Deciphering Carbonates through the Lens of Multiple Pathways to Mineral Formation," at 8:00 am on Wednesday, November 3.

Thank you to Troy Rasbury and the rest of the 2010 Program Committee, as well as to everyone who volunteered to chair our geochemical sessions.

2010 OGD Best Paper Award

The Organic Geochemistry Division of the Geochemical Society announced in July 2010 that Alon Amrani, Alex Sessions, and Jess Adkins were the recipients of the 2010 Best Paper Award for their paper "Compound-Specific ^{34}S Analysis of Volatile Organics by Coupled GC/Multicollector-ICPMS," published in 2009 (*Analytical Chemistry* 81: 9027-9034). The award will be presented during the International Meeting of Organic Geochemistry in 2011 (IMOG 2011).

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