

## FRUSTRATIONS OF A UNIVERSITY BOOK AUTHOR

By Richard C. Larock TAA #1434

*Richard C. Larock received his B.S. at the University of California at Davis in 1967, his Ph.D. at Purdue University in 1972, and completed his postdoctoral training at Harvard University in 1972. He joined the faculty at Iowa State University in 1972 and is presently Professor of Chemistry. He has been an Alfred P. Sloan Fellow and Dupont Young Faculty Scholar and has authored approximately 100 scientific articles, 23 patents and three chemistry books, "Organomercury Compounds in Organic Synthesis," "Solvomercuration/Demercuration Reactions in Organic Synthesis," and "Comprehensive Organic Transformations."*

I am writing this article for the TAA Report to let academic book authors everywhere know that they are not alone in their concerns about gaining academic recognition for the publication of books and to let them know that they can make a difference, though their efforts will not be without frustrations along the way. I am anxious to relate my experience in filing a Faculty Senate appeal on this issue at Iowa State University in the hope that others will be encouraged to join me and the Textbook Authors Association in bringing this issue to the fore in universities across this country. Institutional recognition of books may be slow in coming, but it will come.

Let me provide some necessary background before discussing my appeal. I joined the faculty at Iowa State University in 1972 and began a research program in organometallic chemistry and organic synthesis. The following year I began teaching a graduate course in organic synthesis in which I relied heavily upon the use of reference handouts which have been continually updated and expanded over the years until they were eventually published in November 1989 by VCH Publishers under the title "Comprehensive Organic Transformations." That book is an 1160 page compendium of synthetic organic methodology containing approximately 15,000 reactions and 23,000 references. I personally read all the references and organized the entire manuscript. It took 16 years to

gather the material, a full six months to proof the galley and a further three months to prepare the 9,000 item, 160 page index. Needless to say, I was both relieved and ecstatic when the book was finally published.

The response to my book by the chemical community was overwhelmingly positive. I received numerous highly favorable comments. The first book review used such glowing phrases as "a wealth of information," "contains much of what every synthetic chemist is interested in," "the attractive price of this large volume should allow it to be purchased by all who are serious about synthesis," and "a reference book destined to become a classic of its time." Subsequent reviews have been equally favorable. This book is now THE best selling book of my publisher, who is already encouraging me to prepare another edition.

Since I had previously published major chemical monographs entitled "Organomercury Compounds in Organic Synthesis" (423 pages) and "Solvomercuration/Demercuration Reactions in Organic Synthesis" (607 pages) in 1985 and 1986 respectively, but had been "rewarded" by below average raises by the Department of Chemistry both times, I was particularly anxious to see how the department would respond salary-wise to my latest literary effort.

I had a very productive year in 1989 (10 other publications; 8 talks, presentations or papers; 3 patents;

## NEW WORKS BY MEMBERS

Charles Hubert  
TAA #331

*Electric Machines: Theory, Operation, Applications, Adjustment, and Control, by Charles I. Hubert, Professor of Electrical Engineering, United States Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, NY, Merrill/Macmillan Publishing Co., 1991.*

A new text for courses in electrical machinery in which engineering applications are emphasized. Comprehensive coverage of AC and DC Machines is presented in a straightforward style with a minimum of mathematical jargon. The text stresses current industry requirements, and NEMA standards used by professional engineers. Designed for both two and four year technology programs, it assumes a prior course in electric circuits plus a prior or concurrent calculus course.

*Ed. Note: Members are asked to inform headquarters whenever a new work is published or imminent. Information should focus on factors that distinguish a work from others in its field.*

1 new grant, plus continuation of 3 other outside grants), all well above the departmental averages (6.35 publications; 6 talks, presentations or papers; 0.45 new grants and 1.35 outside grants). Only one other faculty member had published a book and only 3 out of my 31 faculty colleagues had more publications. I also carried probably the heaviest committee load in the Department, and certainly did an above average job of teaching. Since I was also 1 of only 5 Americans to present an invited lecture at the most important international conference in my research field, I had high hopes salarywise.

I was soon to be disappointed. When the unedited comments of



the Department Executive Officer (DEO) and four faculty on the Salary Advisory and Evaluation Committee (SAEC) were returned to the faculty, only three brief, though favorable, comments on my book were evident. Since there were other comments which I found offensive, and the DEO is ultimately responsible for determining salaries, I responded to the DEO with a strongly worded defense of my record. I heard not a word.

When our salaries appeared in July 1990 and I found out that my raise of 7.25% was barely above average (6.55%) and 8 out of 30 faculty had higher percent raises, including several with significantly fewer publications and other accomplishments, I decided to submit a formal appeal to the Faculty Senate. In that appeal, I restated the above information and compared my record, item by item, with one of my faculty colleagues (7 publications, 4 clearly less prestigious talks, virtually identical grant support in numbers and dollars, and NO book) who received a slightly higher raise (7.36%). I appealed specifically on the grounds that my book had not been properly considered in determining my raise and pointed out that of the 12 chemistry faculty who published books during the 1980's, 9 of those authors had subsequently received BELOW average raises, including myself twice previously. The only above average raises went to two Distinguished Professors and myself in the case being appealed. While professional data for one of those other individuals was not available, a promotion probably accounted for the difference between the raise of the other author and the departmental average, not to mention the fact that he had 20 publications besides his book. I fully documented the records of those other book authors and tabulated their salary increases. I also appealed the raises received after publication of my previous two books.

An Ad Hoc Committee of 3 of the 15 Faculty Senate members was chosen to hear the appeal and report back to the full Faculty Senate Appeals Committee. They sub-

sequently interviewed myself, the DEO (who had never submitted any formal written response to the appeal), all but one of the faculty book authors, and the previous DEO, who established salaries the years after which my first two books were published.

The Ad Hoc Committee also pressured the DEO into discussing the appeal with me for the first time. After an hour and a quarter in which the Chairman praised my book and denied that it had been ignored, and I argued my case, the DEO suggested that I drop the appeal. I did NOT. It became clear from that discussion that two members of the SAEC failed to even comment on the existence of my book.

The Ad Hoc Committee also solicited representative publications and encouraged me to submit any materials I desired. I took advantage of that opportunity to educate the committee members by submitting TAA editorials and other materials discussing the value to be placed on the publication of books in a university. While the Ad Hoc Committee Chairwoman sounded sympathetic, she expressed concerns about the constraints placed on the committee by the system.

Ironically, during the appeal process the Chemistry Department offered to nominate me for the Gustavus John Esselen Award for Chemistry in the Public Interest, whose "awardees have generally been individuals who deserve greater public recognition for their accomplishments" (the quotes are from the award announcement).

During the appeal process, I pointed out to the Ad Hoc Committee that distinguished academic researchers are never asked to forego salary increases, because they may receive lecture honoraria, consulting fees or prizes. So why should book authors be asked to do that, because they may receive royalties? I made it clear that I had received little financial compensation for my first two books since they addressed a highly specialized field and were priced so high by the publishers that relatively few were sold. I asked them to decide

whether I had been treated fairly.

In a subsequent memo, I also spelled out exact procedures which I felt would improve the Department's salary evaluation process. It was also pointed out that, because of book reviews and sales figures (no one buys a book they do not

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#### **Editor Group**

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experience includes editorial positions with Houghton Mifflin (college mathematics editor), D. C. Heath (college mathematics and economics editor), the University of Wisconsin Press (general editor) and Longman, Inc. (executive editor).

#### **Doorprizes**

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Said TAA president, Bill Masterton, "we are most grateful to Apple. They are helping us in a number of ways to make the 1991 convention our best yet."

A number of other door prizes will be awarded at the convention. To be eligible to win door prizes persons must register for the entire convention, including the banquet. Those who register early will receive two door-prize tickets instead of the single ticket received by other registrants.

#### **Preconvention Workshop**

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Silverman has conducted similar workshops on the Marquette campus, finding that there was considerable interest. The usual tuition fee for the day-long workshop is \$50, but for this occasion that will be reduced to \$20. Workshop participants will be invited to meet other authors at Thursday evening's happy hour and it is expected that many of them will become members of TAA and will attend the convention.

Invitations are to be sent to college and universities within easy reach of Chicago. TAA members are urged to inform interested colleagues. The workshop begins at 10:00 am on Thursday and runs until 3:40 pm.



his SAEC committee for 1989-1990, book writing by a faculty member was not seen as a particularly important endeavor."

My sole victory at this stage was contained in the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendation "that the Chemistry Department put their common-law understandings into a written document so that faculty members have a clear idea of the importance of his/her professional activities with regard to salary determination," a recommendation that the Chemistry Department is likely to ignore. The Ad Hoc Committee also observed that the DEO "should have taken more leadership in dealing with the problem and in making an effort to resolve the issue before an appeal became necessary."

Needless to say, I responded with a nine page restatement of my case, making sure that the full Faculty Senate Appeals Committee heard all of my arguments and rebuttals. I attempted to raise the fairness issue and to point out the Chemistry Department's failure to uphold the stated university policy of encouraging the publication of books and rewarding such individual achievements by salary increases. TAA materials on this issue were also enclosed.

I lost by a vote of 13 to 1 in the full Faculty Senate Appeals Committee! The one member of the Chemistry Department serving on the committee, who incidentally claimed to be quite sympathetic to the issues I raised, withdrew from any involvement in the case.

The acting Provost subsequently met with the Chairman of the Faculty Senate Appeals Committee and the Ad Hoc Committee to discuss the case. She has since written me denying my grievance and stating that the committee's findings are "reasonable and that its recommendations derive logically from the findings." She did "encourage the Department of Chemistry to continue its efforts to clarify and specify in writing its criteria for salary determination, including the role of textbooks, a process which I understand is already underway in the department. She concluded the

letter as follows. "Although I am not able to find in your favor with respect to the grievance, I want to commend you for producing what I understand is an important contribution to the chemistry literature. A textbook is a major undertaking, and one for which I'm sure you will receive from your peers the recognition you deserve. Moreover, I am impressed, as was the ad hoc committee that reviewed your grievance, by the high regard in which you are held by your colleagues. You are a valued and highly productive member of our faculty and we appreciate that very much."

In my response to the acting Provost, I expressed my disappointment at her decision, but indicated encouragement in the fact that the Chemistry Department has since revised its salary evaluation procedures, and the DEO's opinion of book writing SEEMS to have changed markedly (see later). I pointed out that no discussion of criteria for salary determination has taken place, nor had anything at all been put in writing by the Department with regard to salary. I thanked her for the compliments, but indicated that I had heard similar kind words from the DEO, the Ad Hoc Committee and the Chairman of the Faculty Senate Appeals Committee, but that their actions spoke louder than their words. I stated my pleasure at her comments on textbook writing and the peer recognition she was sure I'd received, but expressed my disappointment that few of those peers are members of this university! I declared my intentions to continue my campaign and indicated that I was not alone, since TAA's subcommittee studying this issue consists of three Iowans and a Michigander. Finally, I indicated that I would send her and the President of the State Board of Regents a copy of this article and promised to PROPERLY recognize Iowa State University's "encouragement" in all future editions of my book.

The story does not end there however. Virtually simultaneous with the Appeals Committee decision, the Chemistry Department began a discussion of our salary

## INNOVATIVE BOOKSELLER FILES BANKRUPTCY

### Entrepreneur Vows to Rise Again

The *Student Resource, Inc.* (TAA Report, April, 1989) is filing Chapter 7 bankruptcy, according to Stephen Perry, founder of SRI. The company's aim was to provide new texts to students at prices competitive with used books, taking orders by telephone and delivering books to students. At one time, books stored by SRI at a campus in Greeley, Colorado were damaged by vandals wielding cans of black spray paint.

Perry blames the financial problems on the capital venture firm, Centennial Fund, that helped finance SRI. When it acquired a majority of the stock, fundamental policy decisions were made that brought down SRI, according to Perry. They gambled on changing SRI's operation to catalog sales and lost, Perry told TAA. SRI's interim president, appointed after Perry's resignation, blamed Perry, saying "it's been his show."

Perry claims that he is not out of business and is starting a new company that will do what he originally planned to do. He said "by August of this year we hope again to be a presence in the marketplace."

evaluation procedures, since a number of faculty were clearly unhappy with those used the previous year. The Department subsequently chose a process wherein (1) the SAEC members discuss their evaluations among themselves and may add an addendum prior to submitting them to the DEO, and (2) the DEO submits his comments and those from the SAEC members to the faculty for possible rebuttal prior to sending them on to the Dean. (my motion unanimously passed). The final salary decision still rests, however, in the hands of the DEO.



## CHAIR OF TAA'S COMMITTEE WRITES ON TEXT AUTHORING

### Published in Newsletter for Department Chairs

L. Kathy Heilenman, (French, University of Iowa), chair of TAA's committee on text authoring and academic values, has published an article "Text Authoring as Academic Work" in the Spring, 1991, issue of *The Department Chair*. The article mentions TAA and its committee and discusses the problem of who controls the production and knowledge, the evaluation of text materials as academic work and the reward system in the academic community. The article also named the other members of Heilenman's committee, William Rudolph (mathematics, Iowa State University), Jim Shymanski (science, University of Iowa) and Thomas J. Sullivan (sociology, Northern Michigan University).

reopener to be negotiated with each subsequent edition. The relevant clause might read: "The provisions of this Paragraph shall not apply to subsequent editions, if any, of the work, and advances (and/or grants) for future editions shall be separately negotiated between the parties."

### Recoupable Advances

Advances are the author's compensation for time and risk in writing a book. They should not be recoupable from the author except as a credit against royalties. This should be spelled out in the agreement. To protect both parties the clause might read:

"So long as a complete manuscript is submitted in a good faith attempt by Author to satisfy the prerequisites of the Agreement, advances shall not be recoupable against Author except as a credit against royalties earned by sale of the work."

### Grants

The author should make an effort to have a portion of the prepublication consideration paid in the form of a grant. A grant is consideration in addition to royalties, whereas an advance is merely an early distribution of anticipated royalties credited against the future royalties. Grants can be given for any number of reasons: to cover the cost of required travel, to pay for needed equipment (e.g. a word processor), to compensate the author for the development of ancillaries (photos, art, software package), or to pay for income lost while writing the work.

Be skeptical of provisions that say the publisher will pay the cost of (e.g. art) up to \$30,000 particularly when the number and/or cost of art work is either unknown or under control of the publisher. This is not a grant, but rather just a shifting of the burden of a portion of production costs from publisher to author with a limit on the publisher's portion, but potentially no limit on the author's. I know authors who have authored highly successful texts earning millions of dollars for publishers and very little for the author because of such clauses.

### Conclusion

The contract provisions for royalties, advances and grants, perhaps more so than other provisions in the contract, are meant to be negotiated. Substantial advances should be negotiated both to tide the new author through that period when no royalties are being paid, and to commit the publisher to publication of the work. Negotiate break point or sliding scale clauses that allow the publisher to recoup its costs at a relatively low royalty rate, and give the author a larger share of the profits once costs are recouped. With the use of a little negotiating skill and fortitude, you will benefit both yourself and other authors by negotiating a royalty clause that properly compensates your creative efforts.

### Frustrations

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expect to use), books are actually much easier to evaluate than research articles. However, time must be allowed to gather such data. When the Department ignores publications after the year of their publication, as my Department does, you deny the book author a fair review.

In late January 1991, the Ad Hoc Committee submitted its three page report to the Faculty Senate Appeals Committee and myself, and I was given five days to respond. To my considerable disappointment, my grievance was denied. They stated that there was "no consensus among faculty interviewed on the weighting of published books for salary consideration...Some [SAEC] members did take the book into account, others didn't, but those who didn't were also the ones who didn't view book writing as particularly important." They would not look at the comparison of my record with that of my close colleague, because they did not feel it was in their "purview to quibble over two excellent records." Since no published reviews of my book were available at the time of the salary evaluations, they believed that "the 'impact' of the book among organic chemists would have been impossible to determine the year it was published." They acknowledged that the Iowa State University Faculty Handbook encourages the development of educational materials, such as books, and that such books are the sole property of the owner, but they concluded that "a logical extension of this policy is that because the author claims the royalties from the book, further salary compensation by the author's department is unnecessary," a statement I find particularly offensive. While they acknowledged that the Chemistry Department had no written rules for evaluating faculty for salary purposes, they concluded that "because departments...set salary, the department ultimately decides how book writing will be rewarded. In the case of the DEO of Chemistry and



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Not until the morning after my letter was sent to the acting Provost (with a carbon copy to the DEO) and three weeks after our faculty meeting, did the faculty finally receive written guidelines from the DEO on the salary evaluation procedure to be followed this year. As pointed out in three subsequent memos from three different faculty, including myself, the procedure outlined differed significantly from the two key points mentioned above. In a subsequent memo to the faculty, the DEO only corrected the latter point. Furthermore, one of those memoranda, from the member of the Faculty Senate Appeals Committee who withdrew from my case, stated, "The procedure of review, as you describe it, *could be arranged to be arbitrary and capricious* (as in fact it was last year)." Those memos are being forwarded to the Dean, acting Provost and Chairman of the Facul-

ty Senate Appeals Committee.

During the faculty discussion, the DEO also made available a draft version of his charge to this year's SAEC committee, which incidentally consists of all new members. In it he stated that "special attention should be paid to the publication of scholarly research monographs, since they entail a major effort and can have a significant impact on a research field." Could I really believe my eyes? Had my arguments finally hit home? I wasn't certain, so I wrote the DEO asking if he "would be willing at the time of the next significant university salary increase to reconsider my book."

His response rather amazed me. He indicated that he had added the charge about research monographs in response to my complaints and did it because he thought it was "the right thing to do." He assured me that my book's success would "indeed be considered in matters of

salary evaluation." Finally, he said he understood my concern "that such recognition was not translated into salary." Quite an admission for someone who completely ignored my earlier complaints. It remains to be seen whether those promises will be kept, but I am encouraged that an angry book author can make a difference.

I am afraid that all too often (three times in my case!) university book authors sit back and await the recognition they believe their university is sure to grant them once they publish their book. Like me, they are often sadly disappointed. We must speak out against this injustice now (preferably before you publish your own book) and continue to challenge our administrations to face this issue head on. While the battle is likely to prove frustrating at times, I do believe we can make a difference, and we owe it to future academic book authors.