

7-2011

IRPT and Bruce

George A. Kraus

Iowa State University, gakraus@iastate.edu

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IRPT and Bruce

Abstract

I am the Director of the Institute for Physical Research and Technology, also known as IPRT. IPRT is a network of ten Iowa State centers that excel in the translation of basic research and engineering into useful applications and economic development. I am pleased to be here today to offer some thoughts in honor of Bruce, a dear friend for over 20 years. I first interacted with him when he was the Associate Director of Ames Laboratory. It was a good experience. He often had some good insights. When I was the Chair of the Department of Chemistry, Bruce and I collaborated on joint appointments.

Bruce had many qualities that made him unique. He was, of course, a brilliant researcher. You will hear many talks this morning from his colleagues about his wonderful accomplishments. But he was also a thoughtful and innovative administrator. Believe me, those qualities don't occur in the same person very often. Bruce was also an individual who was caring and kind to his colleagues. He was very inclusive. One of the qualities I liked most about Bruce was the fact that whether you were the lead researcher in a project or a summer undergraduate, or perhaps an administrative assistant, he always tried to make sure that you had a voice. He always tried to make sure that you were involved in the operation of the project, and that's a very important quality. Taken together, all these three qualities: brilliant researcher, excellent administrator, and caring person made him clearly unique among people that I knew.

Keywords

nondestructive testing, nondestructive evaluation, QNDE

Disciplines

Materials Science and Engineering

Comments

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This article appeared in *AIP Conference Proceedings* 1430 (2012): 13–15 and may be found at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1063/1.4716210>.

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George A. Kraus

Citation: *AIP Conf. Proc.* **1430**, 13 (2012); doi: 10.1063/1.4716210

View online: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1063/1.4716210>

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IPRT AND BRUCE

George A. Kraus
Iowa State University
Director, Institute for Physical Research and Technology
Professor of Chemistry
2759 Gilman Hall
Ames, IA 50011

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I was asked to talk briefly about how the Center for Nondestructive Evaluation fits into the overall picture of Iowa State. It's a part of an institute at Iowa State called the Institute for Physical Research and Technology. IPRT has many different centers, among the oldest of which is the Center for Nondestructive Evaluation. A college is composed of departments. At Iowa State, the College of Engineering has eight departments, but each department is narrowly focused. The Department of Chemical Engineering has a few chemical analysis people, but by and large they're mostly chemical engineers, whereas the Center for Nondestructive Evaluation has a whole cast of people from many departments.

There are a number of engineers, that's a very important component. There are also researchers in statistics, physics, and in chemistry who work together to make CNDE the successful operation that it is.

They're also committed to applications of technology. And I'm proud to say that the Center for Nondestructive Evaluation has been very successful in transferring that to the marketplace by way of startup companies. It's been a very nice experience to see the number of ways in which technology is transferred, not only to the university and to the immediate community, but also to the rest of Iowa. One of the aspects in which Bruce had great pride was that unit of the Center for Nondestructive Evaluation was led by people like Dave Utrata, who were very instrumental in helping companies in Iowa. They helped no fewer than 25 companies a semester with various types of problems. The companies were very appreciative of the support from CNDE.

The Center for Nondestructive Evaluation is about a mile from campus, with 52,000 square feet of space dedicated to CNDE. They have over \$5 million dollars in equipment, including a recent instrument received through the National Science Foundation competitive grants program for the Terahertz instrument, one of the newest tools in the NDE arsenal. I believe that with the combination of tools in their toolbox and the development and application of these technologies that the Center for Nondestructive Evaluation is the premiere U.S. organization in nondestructive evaluation. This is due in large part to the efforts of people like Bruce Thompson and Don Thompson. We have them to thank.

When I first took over as Director four years ago, I visited a number of centers. Bruce's was certainly one of the most complex in the organization. One day I got there and Bruce was nowhere to be found. As it turns out, he was in my office waiting for me on campus, but I didn't know it at the time, so I thought I'd go to his office and sit down. That was not going to happen. In fact, I looked around and checked to make sure Bruce wasn't hidden somewhere in the office shown in Figure 1. As I see it now, this picture is really a tribute to the many ideas that Bruce Thompson had. He was a very prolific thinker. There were a lot of projects that were successful. Bruce being Bruce, knew where everything was in his piles of paper. You could ask him about something, it wouldn't take him more than a second to find the appropriate area in which to look. It also speaks about a lot of unfinished work, of course, and hopefully CNDE will be finishing off some of those great ideas.

Bruce Thompson, his colleague Don Thompson, many others in the room from Iowa State, and many of you who are alums of CNDE, have been responsible for transforming this center into, I believe, a world-renowned center of nondestructive evaluation. We're proud of that. It's a point of pride for Iowa State. The senior administration, the Dean of the College of Engineering, and myself are all committed to continuing and expanding the Center for Nondestructive Evaluation.



FIGURE 1. Bruce's office.

I can think of no better way to honor Bruce's memory than to see that the Center for Nondestructive Evaluation continues to grow and thrive. Thank you.