VIDEO ARTICLE

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There and Back Again: A Professor's Tale

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Abstract

Becoming a faculty member at a university has been an aspiration since my early days in high school. Since that time, I have always felt an affinity for teaching and helping others to achieve their potential. That personal sense of duty, coupled with the challenges afforded by independent research sparked while an undergraduate, heralded an unmistakable future direction, and I am immensely grateful for all of those colleagues whom I have gotten to know during this lifelong journey. Looking back over the past ~30 years in academe, I can more clearly see where I have hopefully made beneficial contributions to science, engineering and society. In this presentation, I first provide a historical account of my preparation for the professoriate and then recount some of the research, teaching and mentoring highlights in my career. Specifically, I shall discuss the plethora of advances in block copolymers (particularly as thermoplastic elastomers), functional nanocomposites and stimuli-responsive polymers made possible by esteemed members of the Macromolecular Materials & Morphology Group (M3G) at North Carolina State University and devoted collaborators around the globe.

Biography of Presenting Author

Richard J. Spontak is a Distinguished Professor in the North Carolina State University in Raleigh. He received his Ph.D. degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of California at Berkeley in 1988. He then pursued post-doctoral research in Materials Science & Metallurgy at the University of Cambridge (U.K.) and Institute for Energy Technology (Norway) before joining the Corporate Research Division of the Procter & Gamble Company in 1990. Although active in a diverse range of disciplines, his primary research interests relate to the phase behavior and morphology/property development of nanostructured polymers, coatings, stimuli-responsive soft materials etc. He is the recipient of numerous honors and awards such as the ACS Cooperative Research Award in Polymer Science & Engineering, Minerals and Mining Colwyn Medal etc. He is an elected fellow of the American Physical Society, IOM3 and the Royal Society of Chemistry, he is or has been on the editorial advisory board of more than 20 international journals.

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