The 1992 International Symposium on Laboratory Automation and Robotics

1992 was the 10th anniversary of the International Symposium on Laboratory Automation and Robotics. Held in Boston from 25 to 28 October, the meeting attracted an international audience of 425 attendees who came to hear over 50 oral presentations and view 25 poster papers. As in past years, the format for the conference included keynote speakers, other oral presentations, poster papers and a visit to the Zymark Corporation facilities in Hopkinton, Massachusetts. Keynote addresses were presented on Monday morning and were followed by parallel sessions, one on data management/data handling and one on validating pharmaceutical laboratory automation. The latter continued into the afternoon along with a session on laboratory workstations. Poster papers were presented between 3.00 and 5.00 p.m. Tuesday morning began with a session on managing laboratory automation and was followed by parallel sessions on automating pharmaceutical methods, environmental, and custom automation solutions, each of which continued on into the afternoon. On Wednesday morning there were parallel sessions on chemical analysis and biology/biotechnology.

The first keynote lecture was delivered by Eugene J. McGonigle of the Schering-Plough Research Institute on: 'Practical aspects of laboratory automation in pharmaceutical development'. Sean O'Connor of Bristol-Myers Squibb Pharmaceutical Research Institute followed with a keynote address: 'Rational drug design, planned serendipity and the place of automation in pharmaceutical lead discovery'.

The presentation of the 'Pioneers in Laboratory Robotics' awards took place on Monday morning following the keynote addresses. The 1992 recipients were:

LeEtta Jarvis (*University of Minnesota, St. Paul*)
Julie Tomlinson (*Glaxo, Inc.*)
Kyle Hama (*Syntex Discovery Research*)
Joseph Franchetti (*SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals*)
Frank Settle (*Virginia Military Institute*)
Randy Simpson (*United States Department of Agriculture*)
Dieter Fridel (*Bayer AG*)
Paul Morabito (*Dow Chemical*)
Ronald Anstey (*Wyeth-Ayerst Research*)
Robert W. Taylor (*Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department*)
K. Rick Lung (*Du Pont Merck Pharmaceutical Co.*).

As automation takes on more of the tasks in the laboratory and as the quality of results, throughput, and competitive performance become increasingly important, validation becomes more and more significant. This was a major theme for a number of papers at the Symposium. The abstracts of the full programme are included in this issue of *Journal of Automatic Chemistry* through the co-operation of Zymark Corporation; the papers will be available in early 1993 as *Advances in Laboratory Automation and Robotics*, Vol. IX.

This writer highly recommends this meeting, including the visit to Zymark Corporation. The 11th symposium will be held in Boston from 17 to 20 October 1993. Speaker abstracts are due by 15 March 1993 and poster abstracts by 15 July 1993.

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