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Memorial of Robert L. Parker
May 1, 1893–May 5, 1973

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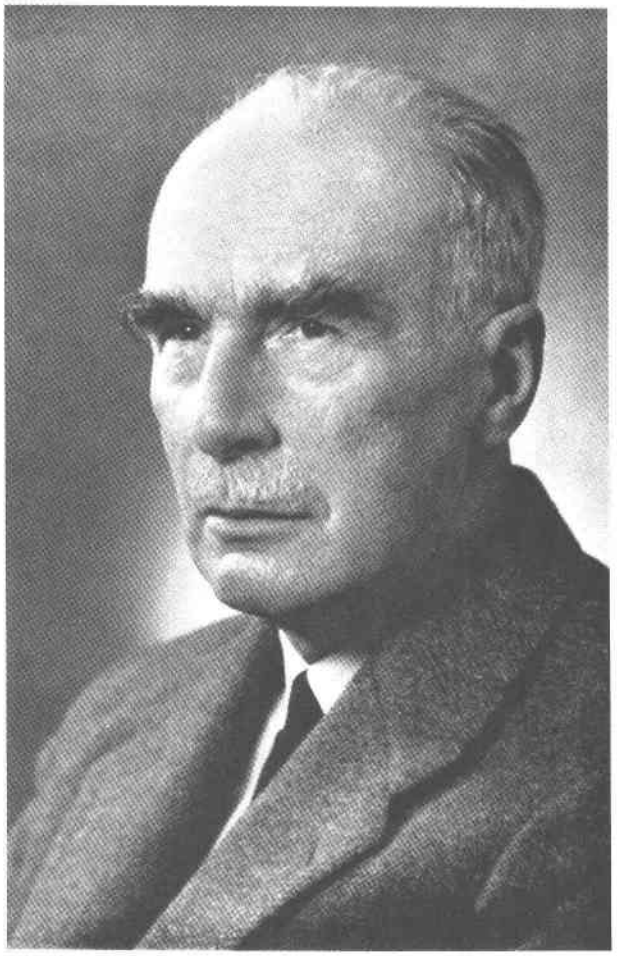
Professor Robert Luling Parker, Ph.D., retired keeper of the mineral collection of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in which he had also lectured in mineralogy and crystallography, died in Zurich on May 5, 1973, after short illness, only four days after his 80th birthday. With him, this institution not only lost an outstanding representative of the classic branch of these sciences, but also a highly esteemed associate upon whose competent advice and kind help his colleagues could always rely.

Parker was born on May 1, 1893, in London, as second son of a surgeon, and went first to school at Bedford. After the retirement of his father, the family moved to Paris, where he attended the Lycée Henri IV, a college of ancient renown. There he received, besides a complete command of the French language and a solid background in mathematics, an excellent general education. After the baccalauréat the family moved to Germany, to Freiburg i.Br., where Parker intended to study organic chemistry under the then well-known Professor Ludwig Gattermann. But soon World War I broke out and Mrs. Parker with her two sons—the father having died in the meantime at Freiburg—had to leave Germany and to reach the nearest frontier in order to avoid internment. By doing so, they came to Switzerland and settled in Zurich, where Parker first intended to continue his chemical studies. At that time the head of the Department of Chemistry of the University was Alfred Werner, famous for his work on complex compounds, for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1913. As this highly specialized branch of chemistry did not meet Parker's interests, and as it seemed hardly possible to work in Werner's laboratory on a subject unrelated to his line of work, Parker decided to change his program. As a student of chemistry, and in accordance with the then prevailing and time-honoured custom, he had also attended the classes of mineralogy and petrology, given by Professor Ulrich Grubenmann. In him Parker had met not only an excellent and benevolent



teacher, but also an upright and dignified personality who profoundly impressed him, so that he cherished his memory during his whole life. It was on Grubenmann's suggestion that Parker switched over to mineralogy and petrology. After work on some Alpine talc deposits near Disentis-Surrhein in the Grisons, he presented his thesis in 1920 and received his Ph.D. from the University of Zurich.

Having acted already under Grubenmann as demonstrator, he was retained as assistant by his successor, Paul Niggli, after the former's retirement in 1921. In 1926 Parker became a lecturer, and in the same year he was appointed keeper of the mineral collection, succeeding Leonhard Weber who went to Freiburg (Switzerland) to take over the chair of mineralogy. Following an ancient tradition in Zurich, he was responsible at the same time for a considerable part of the teaching in crystallography and mineralogy, comprising classes in crystallography for beginners, crystal measurement on the goniometer, blowpipe and microchemical work, mineral determination for beginners as well as for advanced students, and alternating lectures on such topics as alpine minerals, gemstones, meteorites, crystallographic calculations and crystal drawing. Special mention should be made of his demonstrations of selected specimens from the collection of which he was keeper, and which were attended not only by regular students, but also by many amateurs and mineral collectors. All of Parker's lectures and practical classes were given in a clear and lucid manner and showed always careful preparation. They supplemented in an excellent way the more theoretical and, for the average student, often rather difficult approach preferred by Paul Niggli.

But the main task entrusted to Parker was of course to look after the mineral collection of the ETH, an old established institution, rich in fine Alpine specimens, a job he was especially qualified for. Under his able and competent management the collection was entirely reorganized and modernized. The rightness of his conception was proved by the steady stream of outside visitors especially on Sundays. His was also the idea to concentrate the rather modest means available for new acquisitions on specimens of paragenetic interest, especially Alpine ones, which still were available at reasonable prices, instead of trying to obtain a few highly spectacular, but scientifically perhaps less important ones. A further important step in this policy was the purchase of the unique collection of Alpine parageneses brought together by the well-known mineral collector Johann Koenigsberger, Professor of Theoretical Physics in the University of Freiburg i.Br.

Besides his activities as teacher and as keeper of minerals, Parker did a great deal of research, mostly on Alpine minerals, but also on general problems of crystallography and crystal optics. Several books and more than sixty papers in scientific periodicals were published by him. Best known is his book *Die Mineralfunde der Schweizer Alpen* (Basel 1954) which developed out of chapters written by him for an earlier work in two volumes, *Die Mineralien der Schweizer Alpen,* and published jointly with P. Niggli and J. Koenigsberger (Basel 1940). A new and revised edition of the latter was published in collaboration with H. A. Stalder, F. de Quervain, E. Niggli, St. Graeser and V. Jenny under the title *Die Mineralien der Schweiz* (Basel 1973) and is considered to be the standard work on the subject, for the scientist as well as for the amateur collector. Switzerland is much indebted to Parker for having provided a work of

such importance. An excellent popular introduction to mineralogy is Parker's *Mineralienkunde* which has done much to stimulate mineral collecting by amateurs. The first edition appeared in 1945; the fifth, edited by U. Bambauer, has just come out. Well known is also his work on crystal drawing after his own method (Berlin 1929) and the volume published jointly with C. Burri and E. Wenk, *Die optische Orientierung der Plagioklase* (Basel 1967), which contains the most up-to-date stereograms for the determination of the plagioclases with the universal stage. A project much cherished by Parker was another book on "spherical crystallography." It was to summarize his personal approach and his own methods for measurement, calculation and drawing of crystals. Unfortunately it remains unfinished.

Most of his shorter papers were published in the Bulletin of the Swiss Mineralogical and Petrographical Society, of which he was secretary from 1929–34 and president in 1956–58; the Society offered him a "Festschrift" in 1963 on the occasion of his 70th birthday (*Schweiz. Min. Petr. Mitt.* 1963, **43**, 1–434) which contains also a complete bibliography up to this date.

When the International Mineralogical Association was founded in 1958 in Madrid, Parker was elected its first president, an office which he was highly qualified for. His activity was aptly characterized by Professor D. Jerome Fisher in the above mentioned "Festschrift," from which we quote:

> "With his suave, diplomatic, polylingual abilities, Professor Parker made an ideal chief executive to see that the infant association received the proper nourishment to gain wide acceptance in a minimum time."

This memorial would be incomplete without mentioning that Parker's interests were not confined to professional activities. On the contrary, they were numerous and covered an astonishingly wide field. He was a cultivated man in the truest sense of the word and was highly interested in such varying topics such as classical music, painting, and architecture and did much traveling, especially in Italy. He enjoyed the solving of mathematical problems and was much interested in astronomy. Parker also kept well informed in politics, excelled in photography, and cultivated roses in his garden. His many interests were shared by his wife Saroka, née Wagapoff, who kept him a pleasant and hospitable house where guests felt much at ease, and where endless discussions on the most varied topics took place. None of those who had the privilege to enjoy the hospitality of the Parkers will ever forget those pleasant evenings.

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Memorial of Lewis Stephen Ramsdell
June 4, 1895–July 14, 1975

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Lewis S. Ramsdell, Emeritus Professor of Mineralogy and former chairman of the erstwhile Department of Mineralogy of the University of Michigan died in Palo Alto, California, on July 14, 1975, at the age of 80.

Born in Clinton, Michigan, Lewis Ramsdell spent essentially his entire academic career at the University of Michigan, first as an undergraduate student (BA, 1917), then as a graduate student (MS, 1919; Ph.D., 1925) and concomitantly and subsequently as a teacher (Instructor, 1919; Assistant Professor, 1926; Associate Professor, 1935; and Professor, 1944). He served as Chairman of the Department of Mineralogy from 1951 until his retirement in 1961. His stewardship of the Department of Mineralogy was its last, for, upon his retirement, the Department was wed to geology, a marriage, if not of love, at least of convenience.

During his 42-year career as a professional mineralogist, Lewis Ramsdell contributed most significantly to science and mankind in three principal domains:

(1) Teaching. Sent by the late Dean Edward H. Kraus to the University of Manchester, England, in 1933 to learn methods in the application of X-ray techniques to crystallography and mineralogy, Rams-