

## George Bell Frankforter

The first training in chemistry at the University of Minnesota was conducted in a damp basement laboratory by a staff member, who in addition to these duties also served as an instructor in French. The status of chemistry improved, however, and in 1880 Dr. James Dodge, who had just received his Ph.D. degree with Bunsen in Germany brought new life to the department. He remained at Minnesota until 1893 and then went westward to California. Instruction in chemistry was enriched during the regime of Dr. Dodge; a course in organic chemistry was introduced and according to the records some new apparatus was purchased. A curriculum with a major in chemistry was established in 1891, but there were no graduates from this curriculum until 1897.

Dr. Frankforter became associated with the chemistry department in 1894, after having received his Ph.D. degree with A. W. von Hofmann at the University of Berlin. His enthusiasm and scholarship attracted students to chemistry and in 1902 there were thirty students enrolled in the chemistry curriculum. On May 17, 1904, the Board of Regents established the School of Chemistry as an independent unit and appointed Dr. Frankforter as its Dean. The present standing of chemistry at Minnesota and the recognition accorded to the work of the staff in this field is, of course, due to a large number of factors. However, it is the opinion of the present staff members that one of the major contributions to its strength lies in the present form of organization, which was envisaged by Dr. Frankforter and the Regents of that time.

An equally important source of strength which must also be attributed to Dr. Frankforter was the early recognition of the necessity of adequate library facilities and a well-trained staff. Our present excellent collection of source material was begun under his personal direction, and some of the early journals which are now almost irreplaceable were his own personal donations to the University. Many visitors to the chemistry library are surprised to find such a complete file of journals covering the early periods of chemistry.

Mention of only a few of the staff members who served with Dr. Frankforter will show that he was equally successful in recruiting a high-grade staff. The names of Professors Sidener, Harding, Cohen, Frary (the present director of research for the Aluminum Company), Temple (one of research directors of the duPont Company -- now retired), Hunter, Writchevsky, MacDougall, and others recall to many former students teachers of exceptional abilities.

Graduate work began at an early date in the School of Chemistry. The first Ph.D. in Chemistry was conferred in 1902, and the recipient was Dr. Saul Glasoe who is at present Professor of Chemistry and Vice President of St. Olaf College. Dr. Frankforter's next Ph.D.'s were W. C. Frary, Lillian Cohen, Harold Braun, Sterling Temple, and Paul H. Brinton. The success which these students achieved in

later life bears witness of the scholarship of Dr. Frankforter. His name is starred in the first edition of American Men of Science, and he has fifty-six publications covering the period 1892-1926. It is interesting to note that one of these publications (with Dr. Kritchevsky) describes a fundamental study of a reaction which later played an important role in the preparation of the important insecticide, DDT. Frankforter and Kritchevsky did not prepare DDT, but they prepared many compounds closely related to it. They were not concerned with insecticides, and doubtless would have missed the fact that DDT is an insecticide had they actually prepared it. They were interested in the scope of the reaction.

Dr. Frankforter was a distinguished chemist; he was the founder of the School of Chemistry, and he developed a pattern of high standards of performance for its students and staff. The chemistry building, which for many years housed the School of Chemistry, was planned and built during the time that he served as its Dean. After his active days had passed, he remained a loyal and enthusiastic supporter of the School of Chemistry and the University of Minnesota in spite of difficulties which would have embittered one unable to rise above personal jealousies.