

Presentation to Dr Mo Williams

During the 39th Council meeting at Geneva (29–30 August 1997), IUPAC's President, Prof. Albert Fischli, made a presentation to Dr Mo (Maurice) Williams, who retired in April after 29 years as Executive Secretary of the Union:

'I have the privilege and the very personal pleasure to say goodbye to Dr Williams, to wish him all the best for his retirement, and to welcome him as a personal advisor to our new Executive Director, Dr John Jost, until the end of October.

'Despite his Welsh name and the Welsh propensity, not to use one word where six will do, Mo was born and raised in Birmingham, UK. He graduated BSc in chemistry at Birmingham University in 1953, and went on to do a PhD in Prof. Ron Belcher's eminent School of Analytical Chemistry under the joint supervision of Belcher and (then) Dr Tom West.

'Leaving Birmingham University in 1956, he spent two years in ICI Metals Division's Research and Development Department, which was much concerned at that time with the analysis of new metals like titanium, zirconium, and beryllium, and their alloys.

'In 1959 he moved to become lecturer in analytical chemistry at Birmingham College of Advanced Technology, which is now the University of Aston. While there, he became Editor-in-chief of Mr Robert Maxwell's international analytical chemistry journal *Talanta* (Pergamon Press). His qualities were recognized by Maxwell, who offered him the post of managing editor/learned journals at Oxford, which he accepted from the start of 1966.

'When he was offered the opportunity to become the first professional IUPAC Executive Secretary in April 1968, he accepted provided that the office could be in Oxford. By the way, the suggestion came through Belcher and West, both of whom served as Presidents of the Analytical Division of IUPAC, and Tom West later on then also as Secretary General.

'That is how we first saw him, and now 29 years later one can say that he is really "Mr. IUPAC".

'Outside IUPAC, he has been an engaged contributor to the administration of sport. He was County President of the Oxfordshire and North Bucking-

hamshire Amateur Swimming Association in 1984.

'As we all know, he is a keen golfer and he looks forward to devoting much more time to it in his retirement, along with his wife, also a keen golfer.

'He has always been a keen and vocal supporter of Aston Villa Football Club and, if at this General Assembly Mo's smile seems somewhat strained, it is probably because Aston Villa is at present at the bottom of the British Premier League.

'I have the pleasure to hand over to you Mo, a small present, a silver salver with the signatures of all the 15 Presidents of IUPAC under whom you served.

'Let me also express the thanks of IUPAC to Mrs Ulrike Inglis who came to the IUPAC Secretariat at Oxford in 1976, to Mrs Erica Sheppard who joined us in 1977, and to Mrs Sandra Hornblow who started work with the Union in 1989. IUPAC would like to express its appreciation for all that you have done for the Union, and we wish you all the best for your future.'

In his reply, Dr Williams said that, despite the inevitable ups and downs, overall the 29 years had been an exciting time and a privilege to serve as the Union's Executive Secretary. In addition to working under 15 Presidents, there had been six Secretaries General and five Treasurers, and he has made countless friends throughout the world. The growth in work for the Secretariat was reflected in the fact that only two Commission reports were published in *Pure and Applied Chemistry* during 1968, but there would be over 50 in 1997. Fortunately, he had been supported throughout by excellent colleagues: besides the three secretaries present at

**Mo Williams receives a silver salver
from Prof. Albert Fischli**

Geneva, two others had remained at Oxford, and there had been exceptional backing from Miss Ann Troughton (Assistant Executive Secretary) for 20 years and from Dr Mike Freemantle (Information Officer/Affiliate Affairs Secretary) for nine years. Dr Williams offered his best wishes to Dr Jost for the wider development of electronic services at the new Secretariat in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

**The presentation to the IUPAC secretaries by
Prof. Fischli**