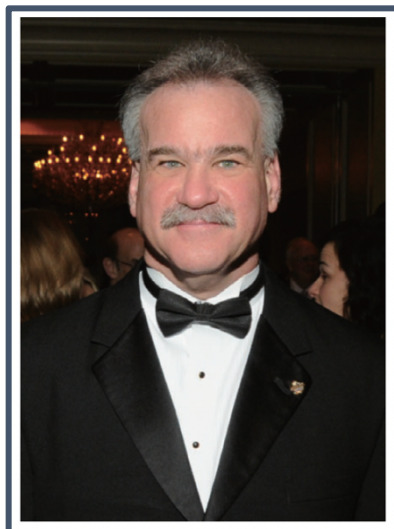


INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES BY SCOTT E. DENMARK, 2008



In the intervening years since “The Chief” wrote this introduction to the second of his publishing creations, much in the world of chemistry has changed. In particular, the last decade has witnessed a revolution in the generation, dissemination, and availability of the chemical literature with the advent of electronic publication and abstracting services. Although the exponential growth in the chemical literature was one of the motivations for the creation of *Organic Reactions*, Adams could never have anticipated the impact of electronic access to the literature. Yet, as often happens with visionary advances, the value of this critical resource is now even greater than at its inception.

From 1942 to the 1980’s the challenge that *Organic Reactions* successfully addressed was the difficulty in compiling an authoritative summary of a preparatively useful organic reaction from the primary literature. Practitioners interested in executing such a reaction (or simply learning about the features, advantages, and limitations of this process) would have a valuable resource to guide their experimentation. As abstracting services, in particular *Chemical Abstracts* and later *Beilstein*, entered the electronic age, the challenge for the practitioner was no longer to locate all of the literature on the subject. However, *Organic Reactions* chapters are much more than a surfeit of primary references; they constitute a distillation of this avalanche of information into the knowledge needed to correctly implement a reaction. It is in this capacity, namely to provide focused, scholarly, and comprehensive overviews of a given transformation, that *Organic Reactions* takes on even greater significance for the practice of chemical experimentation in the 21st century.

Adams’ description of the content of the intended chapters is still remarkably relevant today. The development of new chemical reactions over the past decades has greatly accelerated and has embraced more sophisticated reagents derived from elements representing all reaches of the Periodic Table. Accordingly, the successful implementation of these transformations requires more stringent adherence to important experimental details and conditions. The suitability of a given reaction for an unknown application is best judged from the informed vantage point provided by precedent and guidelines offered by a knowledgeable author.

As Adams clearly understood, the ultimate success of the enterprise depends on the willingness of organic chemists to devote their time and efforts to the preparation of chapters. The fact that, at the dawn of the 21st century, the series continues to thrive is fitting testimony to those chemists whose contributions serve as the foundation of this edifice. Chemists who are considering the preparation of a manuscript for submission to *Organic Reactions* are urged to contact the Editor-in-Chief.