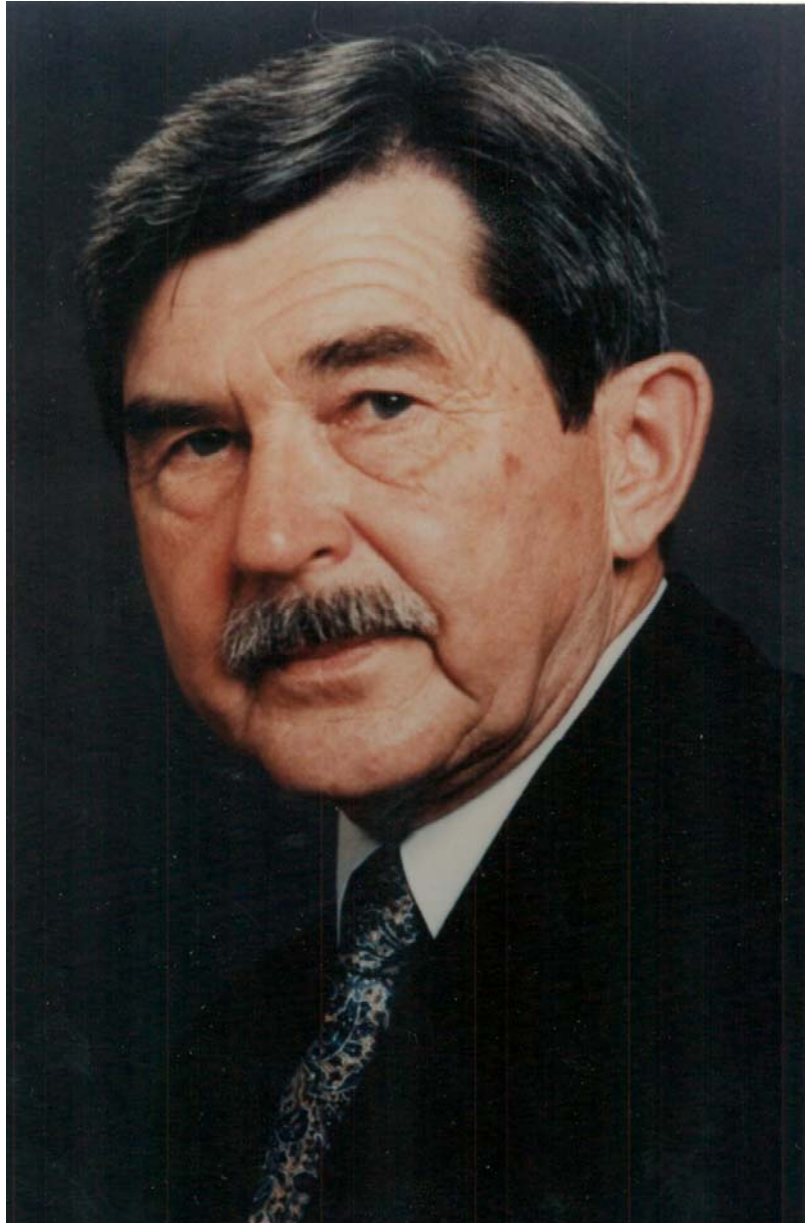


JOHN ROSS

Henry Taube
1915-2005



Henry Taube was born in 1915 in Canada, into a poor immigrant family from Russia, but of German origin. They lived for a while in a sod house and Henry for some years went to a one-room school. His parents had no education, yet Henry and one of his brothers attained in time Ph.D. degrees. Henry's first direction of study was the Lutheran ministry, but at the University of Saskatchewan he received a B.S. in Chemistry in 1935, and a Ph.D. in Chemistry from Berkeley in 1940. He was an Instructor at Berkeley, Assistant Professor at Cornell, rose to Professor at the University of Chicago, and in 1962 came to Stanford University at the time that the Department of Chemistry made several stellar appointments. Taube served as Chair at Chicago for three years, and twice in that post at Stanford, 72-74 and 78-79. At Stanford, Henry taught undergraduate (freshmen) and graduate courses with great care and effectiveness.

Henry's research interests were in both inorganic and organic chemistry: he established the foundations of oxidation – reduction reactions for both electron and atom transfer reactions. In a key paper in *Chemical Reviews* in 1952 he showed the all-important correlation of ligand exchange reactions and the electronic configuration of coordination compounds. His work has been central to many different fields such as electron transfer at semiconductor electrodes, chemiluminescence, solar energy conversion, photosynthesis, electron transfer in proteins, in colloids, in polymers, and others. In his career he published 380 articles and one book.

For his great contributions to science, Henry received numerous honors, including: membership in the National Academy of Sciences (1959), The National Medal of Science (1977), eleven honorary degrees, The Priestley Medal (1985, the highest award of the American Chemical Society) and the Nobel Prize in Chemistry (1983). He was a member and honorary member of scientific societies around the world, including being a foreign member of the Royal Society of London and foreign Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

It is easy for great success to cause someone to put on airs; Henry was always the same person who told you in a straightforward way when he thought something was either brilliant or stupid. This trait made him not only respected but deeply loved by the members of the Stanford Chemistry Department, which established several years ago a seminar series bearing his name. The Taube family and the Department ask that any donations be made to that seminar series for the purposes of endowing its continuation.

Henry had several avocations: one was gardening. Having been brought up on a farm, he enjoyed working in his large garden to grow a great variety of flowers, berries, and vegetables. Another great hobby was collecting and listening to classical music, mostly vocal. He had a vast collection of about 10,000 recordings, some going back to the beginning of recording history. You could pick a song or an aria from an opera and he would likely have several recordings by different artists.

Henry Taube passed away on November 16, 2005. He is survived by his wife, Mary Taube, whom he married in 1952, and by three children, Linda, Karl, and Heinrich.

Written by John Ross
“Memorial Resolution”