

April 1, 2012

Professor N. J. Turro
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Dear Nick:

It was almost a quarter century ago I first attended a Turro group seminar at Columbia. That was as a visitor in May of 1974, on my way to London from Honolulu to join the laboratory of P. de Mayo. The enthusiasm, energy and vigor I saw in you that day remain the same till today. I remember vividly that when I was completing the Ph. D degree there were publications coming out of your laboratory almost every month on dioxetanes, benzene isomers and azo compounds. These exciting papers induced my interest to be trained under your stewardship and luckily it happened so.

As I entered the 7th floor in June 1975 Gary Schuster left, only after teaching me how to use the SPC. Bill Farneth, Bill Cherry, Mirbachs, Carl Renner, Irene Kochewar, Kou Chang Liu, Yoshikatsu Ito and Ming Chow were some of the other group members at that time. The work started around 7 am and continued till late in the evening. Everyday was exciting as some one or the other had something new to say. Interactions with group members were frank and productive. All this because we had a leader who was selfless, interested in exposing his group members to the forefront of science and encouraged his people to contribute to the growth of photochemistry. The group meetings on Thursdays were exciting. As I recall we discussed

almost every thing, even catastrophe theory. These seminars not only enriched our knowledge, but also enhanced our self confidence. It is important for the younger generation to see how ideas develop. Group meetings as well as unlimited access to yourself gave us the opportunity.

You have a unique ability to blend experimental observations and modern theory. You are endowed with the ability to see a pattern in a maze of data. Your paradigms help move the field forward. As I recall you had an explanation for everything. Remember the oscillating chemiluminescent reaction! It was exciting and seemed to make some sense till it turned out to be a phenomenon coupled to the air conditioner in the room.

Above all you are an optimist and believe that every one has a value in science. I watch with envy how you treat all chemists with equal dignity and respect. Certainly you found something good in every one of us and made sure that those aspects are reinforced and highlighted.

I consider it a privilege to have worked with you as a postdoctoral fellow. Since 1978 our relationship has steadily grown. It is amazing that even to this day when I spend time with you I learn something new and come out of Havemayer feeling that there is a lot more to do in science and must return to New Orleans to work harder.

Rajee, Pradeep and myself wish you and Sandy a very happy 60th birthday and prosperous, wonderful and fruitful decades in future. Have a wonderful time with your grand children!!

With best regards,

V. Ramamurthy

