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An international symposium honouring professor Karel Rektorys' eightieth.
Foreword

AN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM HONOURING
PROFESSOR KAREL REKTORYS' EIGHTIETH

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Within the period of January 27–30, 2003 a symposium *Mathematical and Computer Modeling in Science and Engineering* (MCMSE) was held on the occasion of Professor Karel Rektorys' eightieth anniversary of birth ($*$ February 4, 1923). There had been quite many good reasons to expect a large attendance. At least two of them require mentioning. First, the prominence of the honoured person recognized throughout the world and second, the fact that Professor Rektorys has enjoyed extremely wide popularity among his colleagues and students. The Faculty of Civil Engineering, especially its Department of Mathematics were the most devoted organizers of the meeting. The symposium itself was supported by most of the institutions mentioned as well as by individuas. In particular, support of the Czech University of Technology headed by the Rector and the Faculty of Civil Engineering with its Dean together with the sponsoring of Metrostav, ELKAN and Humusoft are greatly appreciated. Among further supporters, the Union of Czech Mathematicians and Physicists and a traditional supporter of academic initiatives Czech foundation for Technology (Česká matice technická) must be mentioned at a prominent place.

The opening ceremony could show that every member of the academic society wanted to greet Professor Rektorys personally: the Laudatio delivered to the audience is included in this volume of Applications of Mathematics devoted to Rektorys' anniversary. Among those who expressed their desire to congratulate Professor Rektorys on the occasion of his important life jubilee there were some of the most prominent representatives of the public and academic institutions such as the rectors of most of the universities located in Prague; e.g. Rector of the Charles University awarded Professor Rektorys the Silver Medal for his merits in pedagogy. Also the Mayor of Prague Dr. Pavel Bém turned up to congratulate Professor Rektorys in person.

A rather big surprise was evoked by a very nice personal gift delivered to Professor Rektorys by a representative of a group of astronomers searching for asteroids. Since January 27, 2003 one of the newly discovered asteroids will be carrying the name Rektorys. Simultaneously, a similar honour was conferred upon the world famous Czech numerical analyst Professor Ivo Babuška, one of the closest friends of Karel

Rektorys and the main lecturer at the Symposium MCMSE. His asteroid will carry the name Babuška, naturally!

This report should also contain the data that characterize the content and extent of the meeting. There were 3 invited plenary lectures delivered by Ivo Babuška (Texas University, Austin), Roland Zdeněk Bulirsch (TU Munich) and John R. Whiteman (Brunel University, Uxbridge), 8 invited lectures in two sections. Altogether, there were 50 papers and 27 posters addressed to the numerous audience during three working days. The conference was attended by 160 mathematicians from seven countries.

Let us mention that the Symposium Proceedings had been distributed to the participants during the registration. These Proceedings contain, in addition to the invited plenary and sectional lectures, also all contributed papers or posters. Some selected contributions are after a standard refereeing procedure published in this issue of Applications of Mathematics. All the published papers offer the reader an opportunity to get an impression of the main stream of the symposium and in fact of the main interests of Professor Rektorys as a scientist. Basically, the papers included can be put into two groups. The first group is represented by lectures on PDE's, their theory and applications, whilst the other contains the lectures related to Informatics and Computer Science.

Summarizing, the meeting, though being originally intended to celebrate one single important person, Professor Rektorys, appeared to be useful for all participants, let them be colleagues, coworkers, friends or students. All of them got an opportunity to meet him and exchange the views on contemporary problems of Mathematics, Science and Technology and possibly on their solutions. The intentions of some others might have been less ambicious: Just to see Professor Rektorys again and discuss the matters and problems of every working day with him and the other participants. I can only confirm that Karel Rektorys was happy, and that was the goal.

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