

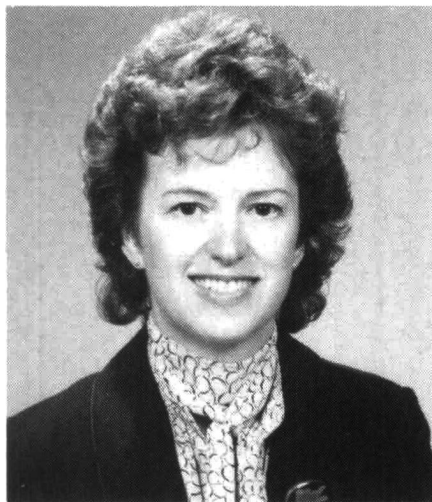
# What is Continuing Education...

**Kathleen C. Taylor**  
**MRS President**

We all know that education is a lifelong process, and one of the main functions of our formal education is to learn how to learn. The skills we obtained as part of this education are only a starting point from which we move from one scientific topic to another throughout a professional career. Some of the learning we undertake once we begin our professional careers is a matter of knowing where to look for the information we need and combining that information with our limited experience. We recognize that not everything we need to know in order to do our research is recorded. The written record on a topic is generally diffuse. Clear understanding may only come once an area has been worked over for many years.

Technical societies and universities have become increasingly aware of the continuing educational needs of the practicing researcher. Programs of short courses and tutorials are offered as a way to introduce scientists and engineers to new areas of research and to teach new skills quickly and efficiently. These programs can provide the basis of understanding upon which the researcher can go on to develop an appreciation for the state-of-the-art in an area.

The MRS Short Course Program, for example, is specifically designed as training for research professionals in current and emerging areas of materials science. Emphasis is given to areas where written



information may not be widely available, and direct experience on the part of the instructor is essential for effectively interpreting the literature and communicating the intricacies of new experimental techniques. The MRS short course instructors are experts in their course topics. Furthermore, as active researchers they recognize the educational needs of the students.

Continuous learning is the responsibility of each research professional throughout his/her career. It is also the responsibility of the companies and institutions that employ them. Research professionals need to be effective in their learning as well as in

producing results. Employers need to recognize that libraries are not the source of all knowledge.

Maintaining effective research skills requires constant nurturing and intellectual challenge. That means in addition to time to read the literature, the researcher benefits from an opportunity to contribute to this literature, attendance at technical meetings, collaboration with other researchers, and exposure to other research settings. A few months spent at a university laboratory can benefit both the professional, the company, and the students.

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Hiring a new employee every time a company wishes to introduce new capability may be an easy solution, but it may be impossible and may fail to recognize both the needs and ability of current staff to move into new areas. The experienced professional has a basis of understanding on which to build new skills and should be provided the opportunity to develop this way.

**MRS**

## Membership in the Materials Research Society

The Materials Research Society is dedicated to fostering the exchange of scientific information across the many disciplines involved in materials research. Membership benefits include:

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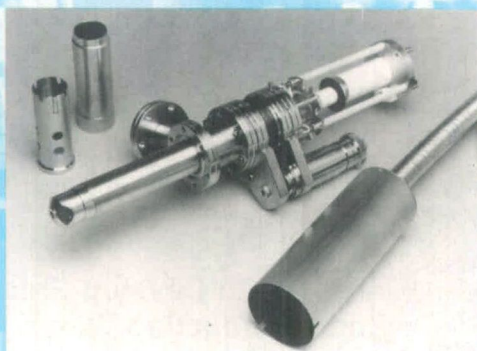
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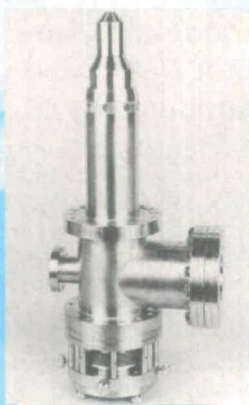
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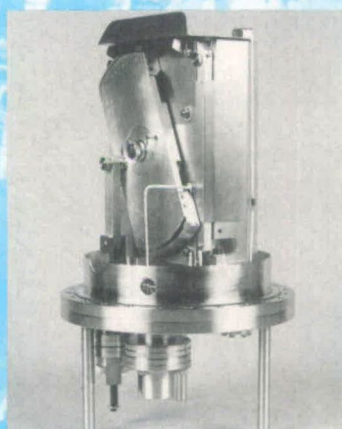
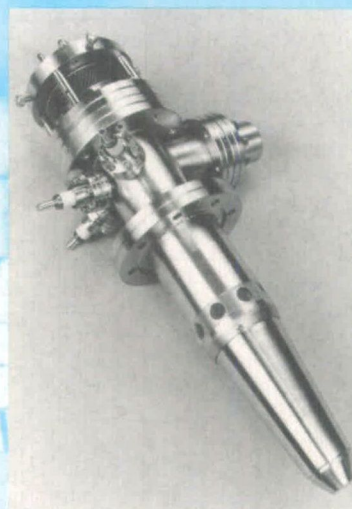
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500Å Metal Ion Gun

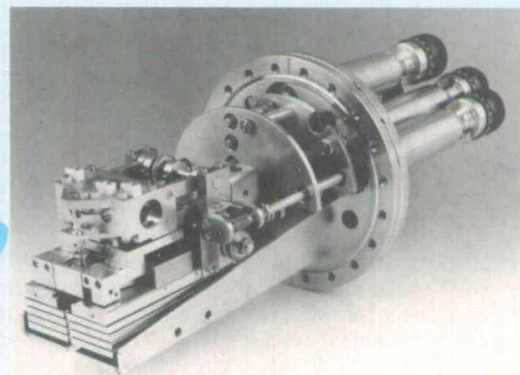


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