

## **Hero of the Industry / Second Year/ AFPC Chemist of the Year**

Ken Parks, a native of eastern Kentucky Mountains, is a product of the Polk County school system!

Despite this handicap, he graduated from Davidson College with a BA in Chemistry and The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a Ph.D. in Analytical Chemistry in 1959.

After two years and a harsh winter in Philadelphia he answered a keyed employment ad for a Ph.D. Analytical Chemist in Florida with a post card and shortly afterward joined American Cyanamid (1961) at Brewster as a development chemist. He was a member of a task force that was charged with devising a process for producing 54%  $P_2O_5$  acid with less than 0.5% solids at the time of shipment and minimum postprecipitation thereafter. After a couple of years heading a development group, Ken then spent a year at Cyanamid's Ag Division Research Center in Princeton before returning to Florida in 1965 to join The American Agricultural Chemical Company (Agrico). Soon Ken became The Agrico Division of Conoco, at South Pierce as a development chemist and, later, as head of the Chemical Development group. In 1967 he was transferred to Memphis as Director of Environmental Control and eventually Director of Environmental and Chemical Control for the Fertilizer Manufacturing division which had seventeen plants in fourteen states and Canada and four regional control laboratories.

In 1969 he returned to the Tampa office as Director of Technical Services for Agrico's National and International Sales Group where his major activities were related to technical support for rock sales to international accounts. In 1972 The Williams Companies in Tulsa acquired Agrico and Ken was named Director of Research. After four years in Tulsa, Ken returned to Florida and was based at South Pierce directing phosphate research and continuing technical support to international developments. Ken was involved in developing the wet rock grinding procedure now used in many phos acid plants, installing a two-pond water handling system, resolving problems in the production of "purified" fire extinguisher grade DAP, and the multi-stage calcining of North Carolina phosphate rock to improve its filtration rate.

Ken was Chairman of the Fertilizer and Soil Chemistry Division of the American Chemical Society, a member of the local chapter of AIChE, The Fertilizer Institute's Quality Control Committee. He was a member of the Phosphorus Task Force, Resource Committee, and Chair, Research Advisory Committee and GTSP Work Group and the first non-European vice-chairman of the Technical Committee of the International Fertilizer Association (IFA). He was the only US member of IFA's membership solicitation team that was sent to China in 1982. He represented the US Industry during discussions on TSP specifications that were held with the European Economic Community and the Office of the US Trade Representative, and was a ten-year member of FIPR's Chemical Processing Technical Advisory Committee.

Ken's patents are related to phos acid purification, filtration rates improvements and rock calcination and he has publications on the determination of water soluble and available  $P_2O_5$ .