

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE VIRGINIA SECTION



E. W. Magruder

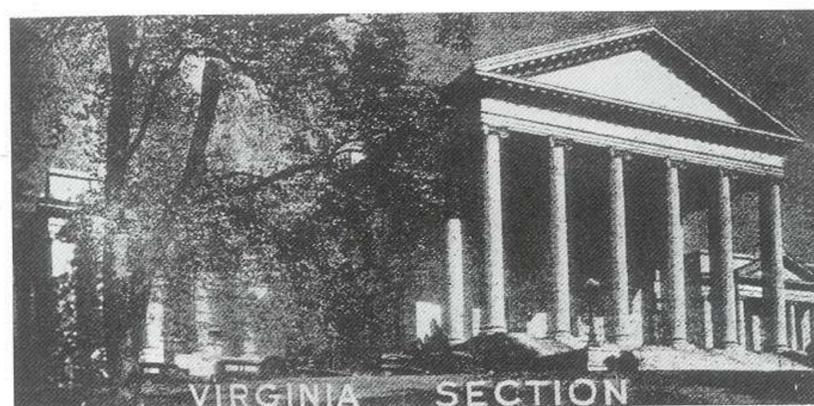
The Virginia Chemists Club, organized in 1907, was the forerunner of the Virginia Section. Dr. E. W. Magruder was the first president of the Club which had 57 members by the end of 1907. The Club functioned for nearly eight years, until a petition to establish a local ACS section in the state of Virginia was approved by the ACS Council. On April 9, 1915, the Virginia Section was issued a charter by the American Chemical Society. The new Virginia Section, with 31 charter members, was the 49th local section of the ACS. The first chairman was J. Bernard Robb.



J. Bernard Robb
 Chairman of the VA Section, 1915

Although the original territory of the Section included most of the Commonwealth, the Section is now much smaller, having lost territory to the Virginia Blue Ridge Section in 1931 and to the Hampton Roads Section in 1944. The Section is now comprised of 54 counties and 16 cities in central and southern Virginia and has more than 1300 members. The Section was initially assigned one member of the national ACS Council. There are now three councilors for the Section who participate in ACS governance at the national level. An Executive Committee, which includes the Section officers, councilors, alternate councilors, trustees, and committee chairs, along with some at-large members, determines the Section's program and sets the budget. Currently, there are fifteen committees operating as part of the Section.

In 1923, the Section published the first issue of its newsletter, *The Bulletin*, a publication that continues today. Nine issues were published in 2014. The Section has maintained an official website since the year 2000 and now has a Facebook page.



The Bulletin Cover, 1946

In April, 1927, the Section hosted the 74th meeting of the American Chemical Society in Richmond with over 1,300 persons attending. The Section has also hosted Southeastern



Regional meetings in 1959, 1969, 1991, and 2011, all in Richmond. The 1991 regional meeting set an attendance record for a chemistry event in Virginia, with 1,349 registrants. The Section also hosted the national meeting of the American

Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) that was held in Richmond in December, 1938. At the time, this was described as the "largest and most important meeting of scientists ever held in the South."

Service has always been an important part of the Virginia Section. Members of the Section were active in many scientific projects during both World War I and World War II. The Section has served chemists in various career functions, including holding employment clearinghouses and workshops. The Section has held hundreds of meetings over the years, including eight in 2014.

Education has been a major emphasis of the Section, which has conducted numerous workshops and programs for high school and college students and teachers. An award has been presented to an outstanding chemistry teacher annually since 1948. Middle school science teachers have been recognized since 1990 and elementary school teachers since 2010. Outstanding chemistry students in colleges and universities have been honored every year for the past 44 years. The Section has presented a Distinguished Service Award to one of its members every year since 1948, and in 1997 began a series of industrial and special awards. For over 15 years, grants have been provided to schools for the enhancement of science instruction.

Public relations for the profession and the science of chemistry has long been an important focus of the Section. In 1927 the Section began producing and broadcasting a series of radio programs on chemistry. Broadcasts continued into the 1970s. The Section began televising programs in 1957. The Virginia Section has participated in the Chemistry Olympiad since 1985, in National Chemistry Week since 1989, and in Chemists Celebrate Earth Day since 2006. Current activities include programs for younger chemists, women chemists, minority chemists, and student affiliate members. An annual poster session featuring undergraduate student research has been sponsored by the Section since 1987.

The Section has received numerous national awards for its programs and activities. It was recognized by the ACS for outstanding performance in 1969 and again in 1988. The Section has received three Phoenix awards and thirteen ChemLuminary awards for its outreach programs that have related chemistry to students, young chemists, women, special-need persons, job seekers, and the general public.

After 100 years of success in serving its members, the chemical profession, and the community at large, the Virginia Section continues as a vibrant organization with both new and continuing programs that will preserve its legacy of service and achievement.