Editorial

Dr W S (Bill) Rapson

This special issue of *Gold Bulletin* commemorates a great man in the gold industry, Dr W S (Bill) Rapson who sadly passed away on the 25th June 1999, aged 86. He had a close association with this journal since its inception and will be sorely missed.

Every industry has had, at times in its history, men of stature who have a major impact on its development. The precious metals industry has had its share of influential men who have helped to shape its future. Some of them are commemorated in company names, in place names or even country names (I call to mind Cecil Rhodes here). Others may be more simply commemorated by the legacy they leave behind them. Dr Bill Rapson was in the latter category, although his name is remembered by a generation through that classic reference book on modern gold science and technology, 'Gold Usage', co-authored with Theo Groenewald. It serves as our 'bible' even today, some 21 years after it was published!

Bill Rapson came late in his career into the gold industry in South Africa, but was a major influence in encouraging technical development and in persuading a secretive industry to share its technical knowledge to mutual benefit. Our current state of technical openness owes much to Bill's support in the early days of Intergold, later to become World Gold Council. Bill encouraged the development of the technical advisory service of Intergold, their active support of R & D projects and the publication of this journal, *Gold Bulletin*, as well as the technical

content of *Aurum*, a gold jewellery publication, later to be resurrected as *Gold Technology*, sister to this journal.

Even in retirement, Bill continued to play an active role on *Gold Bulletin*, through production of the Literature Abstracts and, more recently, as a key member of my editorial advisory committee. The Guest Editorial in the last issue was written just days before he passed away.

Truly, Bill was a man of stature on the technical side of the gold industry and his influence will be long lasting. He was an enthusiast and a friend as well as a technical expert in a wide ranging field. It is an honour to have known and worked with him and I thank him most sincerely for his support, friendship and, on behalf of us all, his significant contribution to the science and technology of gold and its industrial applications. We owe him a lot and, as a tribute, many of his friends and colleagues have contributed to this special issue in his memory*. My thanks to them for their support.

Chris Corti

Christopher W Corti
Editor

**Note: Due to space limitations, some of these contributions will be published in the next issue, volume 33 (1).*