Forward

Contrary to popular opinion, “Life Begins at 75.”

Or, more realistically, “There is Life After 75.”

Or, more personally, “What a Wonderful Way to Celebrate My 75th Year!”

It will be impossible to ever thank John Junkins and his team enough for this most memorable, once in a lifetime, experience. Besides John, there were Aaron Cohen and Terry Alfriend with able assistance from Lisa Willingham. This was the core of the College Station group.

Next we have Kathleen Howell who planned and organized this magnificent issue of the Astronautical Sciences Journal to commemorate the occasion of the Richard H. Battin Astrodynamics Symposium. (I still have difficulty believing that it really happened.)

Then there are the attendees and the authors of the papers for this journal without whom the whole event would have been pointless. Their well-chosen contributions were most appreciated—both their oral presentations and their excellent written documents.

Many of the presenters had comments that I will always treasure. There was one that brought tears to my eyes. Just before Jean Kechichian presented his paper, he spoke of his student days in Belgium: how he discovered “Astronautical Guidance” in a book store, how he was fascinated by the subject matter, how he spent money he couldn’t afford to buy a copy, and how it changed his life. Now he knew what he wanted to do as a career.

It was particularly poignant to have as luncheon speakers Buss Aldrin (the first astronaut in my first Astronautical Guidance class) and Janice Voss (the last astronaut who was both a student and teaching assistant in that course, now called Astrodynamics).

Aaron Cohen admirably played the role of Master of Ceremonies for several of the events. He and his wife Ruth have been wonderful friends for 40 years. John managed, with great aplomb, a pictorial biography on our last night together at the Pebble Creek Country Club. He and Elouise are hosts without an equal and I can heartily recommend Chez Junkins as the place to stay while in College Station.

Many of my past students, many friends whom I had not seen in far too long a time, and many dear colleagues from all over the country were there. It is such a blessing to have these memories which will stay with me always.

Richard H. Battin