

MEMORIAL OF OLAN IVAN LEE

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Olan Ivan Lee, Chief of the spectrographic and microchemical sections of the United States Testing Co., died at the Christ Hospital, Jersey City, New Jersey, on the 26th of November, 1952. Although most of his professional activities were in the fields of chemistry and spectroscopy, he will be best remembered by his numerous friends for his profound interest and contributions to mineralogy.

If one were to attempt to bring to a focus the outstanding characteristics of an individual, then within the limits of terse phraseology, the personality of Ivan Lee crystallizes as the scholar in industry. He possessed the genial quality of introducing the academic approach in the mundane industrial laboratory, and of infecting associates with his enthusiasm for mineralogy, rare books on the physical sciences and the history of gemology. His home was a veritable museum of fine mineral specimens, largely collected during field trips while on brief vacations from the laboratory, and formed an enchanting environment for the entertainment of his friends. An evening spent with Ivan Lee and his wife, Mary, was not only pleasant in the usual amenities of life, but was an intellectual stimulus. The rare specimen of samarskite in his hand ceased to be a black amorphous mass dug up from a long-abandoned mine, but in the narration became a storehouse of rare elements with details of how best to isolate them, and a mystery whose composition was to be resolved by spectroscopy and neat microchemical tests. In the early hours of the morning, amidst the aroma of coffee, one learned that former President Hoover was the erudite translator of Agricola's "*De Re Metallica*," and that certain varieties of tectite were probably chips from the surface of the moon.

Ivan Lee was born on April 17, 1888, at Madison, Lake County, Ohio. His family moved East several years later, and his early youth was spent largely in New York City. He graduated from Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute in 1911 with a B. Sc. degree in chemistry. He interspersed his industrial work with postgraduate studies at Columbia University and special courses in microscopy at the Rochester plant of Bausch and Lomb. A mastery of spectroscopy led to numerous researches on the minor components of minerals and ores, and also provided a basis for many analytical procedures for trace constituents during his tenure as principal spectrographer for the Crocker Cancer Institute of Columbia University.

Ivan Lee was an active member of the mineralogical societies in the Metropolitan area and gave many lectures on his field trips and on re-



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cent advances in mineralogy. He was one of the founders of the New Jersey Mineralogical Society and served as president of the New York Mineralogical Club (1945–1947). He was one of the early members of the Mineralogical Society of America and was elected a fellow in 1923.

During his active life he found opportunity to publish some thirty-four papers in chemistry, engineering, mineralogy and spectrography. Of outstanding interest to mineralogists is his discovery of the reversible photosensitivity of hackmanite, and a review article on the mineralogy of hafnium prepared about three years after the discovery of the element. A select bibliography of his publications in the field of mineralogy is appended.

Olan Ivan Lee is survived by his wife, Mary Stewart, and a daughter, Virginia Lee.

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