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GUEST EDITORS' PREFACE

Antoine Skoulios^a & Daniel Guillon^a

^a Strasbourg, France

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The 17th International Liquid Crystal Conference was held in Strasbourg, France from 19 to 24 July 1998. We are indebted to the members of the Local Organizing Committee and many students and staff volunteers who worked very hard for several months towards the success of this conference. Their efforts were rewarded by an extremely successful and enjoyable conference.

The International Advisory Board and the Scientific Committee deserve our appreciation for their help in the selection of outstanding researchers for the plenary lectures, invited talks, and oral presentations. About 830 participants from nearly forty countries contributed over 930 plenary, invited, oral and posters presentations in three parallel sessions.

We would like to acknowledge financial support from Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, City of Strasbourg, and other sponsors whose names appear on page ix of this volume. Their generous donations enabled us to provide financial support in the form of registration fee waivers or reductions to needy students, post-docs and faculty members from financially disadvantaged countries. We would like also to acknowledge additional aid from the Local Organizing Committee of the 16th International Liquid Crystal Conference held in Kent, Ohio, USA, which covered registration and travel expenses of several participants.

The proceedings include about 330 papers describing experimental and theoretical aspects of the physics, chemistry and applications of liquid crystals, and represent quite precisely the wide variety of topics covered at the conference. The articles published were subject to refereeing; the colleagues who refereed these papers deserve our gratitude for taking time and reviewing a large number of papers.

As guest editors, we thank all those who submitted their contributions for inclusion in these proceedings.

Antoine Skoulios and Daniel Guillon
Strasbourg, France