This SYNTHESIS special issue is dedicated to Professor Scott E. Denmark in honor of his 65th Birthday. Its genesis followed from discussions with Professor Michael Harmata, one of Scott Denmark’s first graduate students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Below we provide a general statement that captures Scott Denmark’s immense contributions to organic chemistry, followed by two personal statements from each, as we were fortunate to have been members of his research group.

Professor Denmark has been highly influential in the discipline and internationally recognized as a leader in the development of novel reactivity concepts as well as catalysts and reagents that lead to powerful synthetic methods for organic chemistry. His distinctive contributions to a remarkably diverse group of reaction classes are characterized by high originality, unusual thoroughness, and extraordinary demanding experimental standards. The breadth of his research accomplishments reflects an intellectual virtuosity in the application of chemical principles to important synthetic and mechanistic problems. A compelling impulse to understand the fundamentals of structure and reactivity is clearly the motivating force behind all of his research endeavors in synthetic methodology. The Denmark approach to organic synthesis is exceptional for its thorough documentation of generality, careful attention to stereochemical detail, and extensive investigation of mechanistic underpinnings. Thieme is thus delighted to assemble a Special Issue that captures cutting edge chemistry to highlight the first-class science that characterizes Scott Denmark’s own transformative contributions to the science of organic chemistry.

As editor for Special Issues in SYNTHESIS, I had the good fortune to take a class in advanced organic chemistry taught by Professor Denmark and to have worked in his group as an undergraduate researcher. Through my interactions with Professor Denmark I was initiated to the wonders of organic chemistry; it is a fascination that persists to this day. Moreover, I have always considered myself fortunate to count Professor Denmark as a lifelong mentor and friend, who has profoundly influenced my life. Happy Birthday Scott!

Erick M. Carreira, SYNTHESIS Editor for Special Issues and Special Topics, and Professor at the Organic Chemistry Laboratory, ETH Zürich

This past year Professor Scott E. Denmark turned 65. Although it is hard to tell, it is somewhat of a scary thought, but only because I am getting older too. I met Scott in 1980 at the University of Illinois. We were both in our first year, he a professor and me a graduate student. I had no intention of taking a class in advanced organic chemistry taught by Professor Denmark and to have worked in his group as an undergraduate researcher. Through my interactions with Professor Denmark I was initiated to the wonders of organic chemistry; it is a fascination that persists to this day. Moreover, I have always considered myself fortunate to count Professor Denmark as a lifelong mentor and friend, who has profoundly influenced my life. Happy Birthday Scott!

Michael Harmata, Norman Rabjohn Distinguished Professor of Chemistry, University of Missouri