Ladies and Gentlemen:

The local Organizing Committee and the International Advisory Committee of EUCAS 2013 decided to dedicate the Session “Pinning and Flux Dynamics I” to the memory of Professor John Clem, who passed away on the 2nd of August 2013, just about 6 weeks ago.

Let me briefly summarize John’s career trying to indicate the incredible loss for the whole superconductor community. John was born in 1938 in Waukegan, a small town in Illinois. After school he got several scholarships at the University of Illinois, where he received his BSc in Engineering Physics in 1960, followed by his MSc in Physics in 1962 and earned his PhD focusing on the theory of superconductivity under John Bardeen in 1965. After two years of postdoctoral positions at the University of Maryland and the Technical University of Munich he joined the Physics Department of the Iowa State University and the Ames Laboratory in 1967, where he spent the rest of his scientific career. He became Full Professor at ISU and Senior Physicist at the Ames Lab in 1975 and was Chairman of the Physics Department from 1982 to 85. He spent several sabbaticals in the US at IBM Yorktown Heights, Stanford or EPRI in Palo Alto, was named “Distinguished Professor” at ISU, was a Fellow of the American Physical Society and the Institute of Physics in London and, at the ASC 2012 in Portland he received the IEEE Award for “Continuing and Significant Contributions in the Field of Applied Superconductivity”, especially for his theoretical insight into the nature of vortices in 2D superconductors, which he called “pancake vortices”.

Professor John R. Clem
1938 - 2013
John, who had married his high school sweetheart Judy right after college graduation, immediately turned Ames into a much visited center for scientists from all over the world (including myself), who were interested in vortex physics and the properties of the flux line lattice, flux pinning, flux cutting and vortex dynamics. But it was not only the science at ISU that attracted us, it was also the warm atmosphere created by John and Judy at their home and at barbecues during the hot and humid evenings of typical Iowa summer days. We were sometimes lucky in persuading John to sing for us in his beautiful baritone. He performed regularly at special events in the Church or at ISU’s Musica Antiqua. We all got to know their children, Paul and Jean and followed their development with great pleasure. Paul became a well known physicist himself. With the advent of high temperature superconductivity, John played a leading role worldwide, as the heart and editor of the famous “High-Tc Update” and as the author of fundamental papers on the subject. He was certainly the most sought-after invited or plenary speaker, both at small workshops and at huge international conferences – and each of his lectures was certainly to the point and enlightening!

As fate unfortunately hit the Clem family in 2001 and Judy became completely paralyzed after more or less successful brain tumor surgery John took early retirement, in order to be there at home and to take care of his beloved wife. However, already in 2009 he too received bad news as he was diagnosed with “mesothelioma”, a kind of lung cancer, which he thought he may have contracted as a youngster working with asbestos during the school holidays. He lost this battle about 6 weeks ago.

John, we’ll miss you and we’ll certainly remember you with the greatest respect for your science and with great love for your warm and charming personality.

Harald W. Weber
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Genova, 18 September 2013