

EDITORS' NOTE

We deeply mourn the loss of Professor Catherine Pasquier, President of the Society for Free Radical Research (Europe), who passed away on November 4, 2002, following a long and brave battle against disease. Catherine has been a close colleague to many of us in the field of free radical research, and on the following pages an obituary is published which captures some of that togetherness. We thank Professor Kelvin Davies for compiling this obituary.

Catherine's resolve was to host the XIth Biennial Meeting of the Society for Free Radical Research International. Indeed, it took place in Paris, July 16–20, 2002, at the René Descartes University, and it was a moving experience to see her cherish this achievement. She was supported by her wonderful family. The Editors of *Free Radical Research* will maintain the memory of Catherine Pasquier, an exceptional friend and colleague.

Barry Halliwell and Helmut Sies

In Loving Memory

Dr Catherine Pasquier (1940–2002)

Our dear friend, Dr Catherine Pasquier died on November 4, 2002 in Paris, France, and was buried on November 8 in Montparnasse cemetery. She is survived by her husband, Dr Gérard Pasquier, and their two sons, Hervé and Bruno. Catherine died at age 62 after a long and brave fight against cancer.

Catherine Pasquier was a researcher scientist at CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) in laboratory Unit U479 of INSERM (Institut National de Santé et de la Recherche Médicale) located at the University of Paris VII—Xavier Bichat. Catherine was born on June 20, 1940 in Saint Briec, France. After her first degree, she worked in several academic and industrial laboratories as a research assistant. Catherine then decided that she wanted to be able to direct her own work, so she returned to university for further study. She graduated from the University of Paris VI and she completed her Ph.D. thesis in 1979, in the INSERM U5 laboratory directed by Prof. Delbarre. That same year, she obtained her appointment at CNRS as a researcher in the department of life science. In 1984, she joined the laboratory of Prof. Jacques Hakim at the University

of Paris VII—Xavier Bichat where she worked in the (then new) field of reactive oxygen species and taught this new subject to students. In 1986, her laboratory became INSERM Unit U294, then in 1998, U479 with Prof. M-A Gougerot-Pocidallo. Catherine was the head of the group working on reactive oxygen species during these years. She supervised several Ph.D. students and postdoctoral trainees. In 1993, she obtained the Research Director degree (Habilitation à Diriger des Recherches or HDR) the highest degree in science in France, from the University of Paris V.

In addition to her scientific work, Catherine organized several meetings in France on reactive oxygen species; most recently, the XIth Biennial General Meeting of the International Society for Free Radical Research (ISFRR), in July 2002. Courageously taking a break in her very demanding chemotherapy regimen, she organized one of the very best conferences the free radical field has ever enjoyed. During the sparkling gala dinner, Catherine outshone even the glittering chandeliers, and all who were present will long remember her joy on that night.



At the time of her death, she was also President of SFRR Europe and SFRR France, and a member of several other scientific societies. Also indicative of her leadership and stature in the profession, she served on the editorial boards of many journals, in addition to being very active in committees locally, nationally, and internationally.

The following is a collection of comments from various friends and colleagues:

"Catherine was a strong person to the end. She was a wonderful friend to our community of scientists as demonstrated by her efforts and extension of hospitality even when she was clearly struggling with her health. Her wonderful smile and positive outlook will be my strongest remembrance of this remarkable scientist and friend."

"I went to Paris last Friday for the funeral of Catherine. The ceremony was simple and full of emotion. Many people who were attached to Catherine and Gerard were present at the cemetery. Three of them spoke about Catherine's life (family life, scientific life and interactions with friends). Everybody was moved to tears. There were a lot of flowers in Autumn colours."

"Catherine had a tremendous enthusiasm for science and a great sense of humour. On one occasion at a Harden Conference in the Highlands of Scotland the speakers were given the task of incorporating a set of six random words selected by those at dinner, into their talks without the audience realizing. These included such unlikely phrases as "wispy beard" and from Catherine herself "Storming the Bastille"—not easy to incorporate into a talk on inflammation in the artery wall! Catherine was one of the judges, a task she relished, and she added to the ordeal of the speakers by deducting marks for bad puns or poor performance! She will be sadly missed as the well rounded and vivacious personality we all remember."

"I was lucky to have had the opportunity to work in the same laboratory as Catherine. She was more than a friend and colleague for me, she was an example of humanity and kindness and was a rigorous scientist. She always found the time for scientific discussion with us and tried hard to solve our problems. During her last few months, her courage and optimism were a lesson to all of us, as she successfully organised the ISFRR meeting despite her suffering. Life in our laboratory will not be the same without Catherine."



"Dear Catherine, we will mention your name with the same tone of voice, we will recall the happy afternoons, together downtown or visiting the missions with Gérard. We will speak again and again about the beautiful congress you have just organized for us, and we will try to think of you without sadness. There is a continuity that cannot be broken simply because you are out of sight. We are expecting to see you soon with your smile again, at the next meeting or just around the corner. Au revoir Catherine."

"It was a great pleasure and a privilege to know Catherine; an excellent scientist and a very warm-hearted person. She was a close friend and lovely person and I think it's a great loss for us all. We shared so much and I am sure I'll miss her a lot."

"What to say about Catherine? Of course she was a friend you could rely on, she was an excellent scientist, she was a fascinating woman, a flame as you called her. When she was present there was light. She was a strong woman with an incredible courage during the last years and she never gave up. How she managed the Paris-meeting was remarkable and admirable, and despite all her suffering she was happy. She had a family who never left her, always present, never insistent. This is something you have to work on for a lifetime. For me it was most remarkable how she managed to combine official business functions with science, with feminine charm, and with humanity. She was both La Pasquier and Catherine in one; She was someone I will never forget."

"Thank you very much for bringing me the sad news about Catherine's death. She was such a warm and generous person as well as a most stimulating colleague and will certainly be missed by all of us."

"Catherine has been attending SFRR meetings from the beginning, before the Society was regionalised and the registration fee for the annual London Christmas meeting of





the SFRR was £5 for members!! She was always a lively participant in both the scientific, and the social aspects of these conferences, and wherever dancing was to be performed Catherine was always first onto the dance floor—many of us will always remember her Harden Conference dancing debut in Scotland!!”

“I am personally very shocked with her death, though I knew there was nothing more to do to help her. She was a gracious lady, always radiating beauty, warmth, and friendship; with a straight, honest and direct approach to science. A permanent illustration of how science and deep human emotions may go together in superior people.”

“It was a great pity to hear the sad news that Catherine had passed away. It has been always a pleasure for us to meet Catherine and her husband, sometimes with their sons, at Paris, Kyoto, and anywhere. We enjoyed feeling the flavour of Paris and France as well as her scientific achievement.”

“We all equally benefited from the unique and elegant way Catherine behaved in our scientific community.”

“I learned with profound sadness that Catherine passed away a few days ago. It is difficult to imagine that we will not see anymore her beautiful smile even if we knew that she was badly ill. I keep in mind how she was so courageous during her illness. My last image of her was at the end of the meeting she organized in Paris last July, how pleased she was when she was informed that the meeting was so successful (she almost jumped from her seat!). I remember very well when I met her for the first time in Munich, Germany where in 1984 she participated in an international conference on “Oxygen Radicals in Chemistry and Biology” and immediately we became good friends. How could it have been not the case since Catherine was a such an easy person to get along with?”

“Everybody is speaking about you but you are not here. What will we remember now and always about you? Your smile, the smile of a wife, happy for having a wonderful husband with you, with his own human unique personality. The smile of a mother of two great children, but always a smile of gratefulness and not of pride. We will remember your smile as a scientist, surprised at your own success, and

sometimes your smiling answer to difficult questions. We will remember your quiet smile of a friend always ready to understand, always avoiding judgment and always happy to accept a human being as a friend. The humanity, the irony, the naivety of your smile has gone away with you. And in our years it remains the echo of your English conversations, so much punctuated with delightful French inflections, not accidental, but a choice of your personality. You have decided to leave us but your class as a scientist, as a wife, as a mother and as a woman will stay with us for the rest of our days.”

“Catherine and I were just starting a new cooperation about the degradation of proteins in neutrophils—Two weeks before she got this awful diagnosis we performed the first measurements. I feel that Catherine’s passing away is really a loss to the scientific community and for both the ISFFR and SFRR Europe organizations.”

“I admired her honesty and candid statements. I always saw her sailing through conferences completely detached from the nonsense of both local and international politics. I appreciated her convictions about her research, and most of all I always enjoyed her friendship.”

“Cathy Pasquier was a dear friend and colleague who always had room in her heart and life for all of us. It was always wonderful when this beautiful, smiling, friendly and informed scholar was in our midst. Catherine looked forward to coming every year to the Oxygen Club of California meetings in Santa Barbara and regularly contributed to SFRR related activities around the world. She was a leader of SFRR Europe and chief organizer of the biennial International meeting in Paris 2002. I am forever grateful for her many contributions to fostering research and education.”

“How do you deal with the loss of someone as wonderful as Catherine Pasquier? The simple answer is that she is irreplaceable, and our lives will always be the poorer without her.”

“A greeting from Catherine could make one’s day. Her smile was all encompassing, and she would focus her attention on you as if you were the only person in the room, hall, or wherever the encounter took place. There was a warmth in that interaction that I will surely miss.”

“The remembrance that I will keep is one of a colleague and friend, always showing remarkable cordiality and great broadmindedness. As a plant biologist, I would like to bear witness to her interest in the “green” side and to the support that she always brought to us. I will never forget that, in spite of a great tiredness, she was bent on attending the Nice meeting on “Free radicals and oxidative stress in plants. I will miss her a lot.”

“Catherine, as President of the French Free Radical Society, and of SFRR Europe, you did great work to promote research on Free Radicals. The members of the French Society are very grateful to you and proud that you organized the ISFRR Biennial meeting in Paris which was a great success. We would like to thank your husband Gérard and your

sons Hervé and Bruno who supported and helped you with a great deal of love to achieve your professional goals. Your force of will to fight and overcome the difficulties of life is a tremendous lesson in courage that all of us will never forget. We will keep in our heart the memory of your kindness, your simplicity, the high quality of your science, and your wonderful smile which was the evidence of your love for life. Thank you Catherine."

"Catherine, I cry that you were taken from us. I cry for your husband, your sons. For you were not only a great scientist, a leader in your field, an elected official of your scientific organizations, but also a wife and mother. I saw that side of you, for I shared these roles and understood. Because of this "other side" you were warm and special, you will be missed."

At minimum it must be said that Catherine Pasquier was a serious and successful scientist, a valued and generous colleague, a loyal and precious friend, and a loving wife and mother. For those of us who had the privilege of knowing her, the bright flame of Catherine's memory will always be a cherished remembrance.

This obituary, including all quotations, was contributed by several of the friends and colleagues

of Catherine Pasquier listed (in no particular order) below. As extensive as this list may be, there were others whose material did not reach us in time for publication. We apologize to any and all who could not be included in this list of friends, colleagues, and admirers.

Kelvin J. A. Davies

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Photographs courtesy of Bruno Pasquier and Jamel El Benna.