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Obituary

Emanuel Gil-Av 1916–1996

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Dr. Emanuel Gil-Av on March 24, 1996 in Rehovot, Israel. Dr. Gil-Av was born in Russia in 1916 and immigrated to what was then Palestine when he was twelve years old. He studied at the Hebrew Gymnasium of Hertzlia in Tel-Aviv. Continuing his education at the Ecole Superieure de Petrol in Strasbourg, he concentrated on chemical engineering. During the Second World War he worked in Manchester, UK, in the laboratory of the eminent scientist, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, who later became the first president of Israel. After the war, Prof. Ernst Bergman invited him to work at the Ziv Institute in Israel, which later became The Weizmann Institute of Science. He finished his Ph.D. at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1952. He worked at The Weizmann Institute of Science, where he was a Professor of Chemistry.

In science, he was a visionary. His foresight led his group to discover the first methods for the separation of enantiomers. The difficulty of this task can be inferred from the following quotation from

A.J.P. Martin on learning of the first gas chromatographic separation of enantiomers performed by Gil-Av's group: "As you no doubt know, I had not expected such attempts to lead to much success, believing that the substrate-solvent association would normally be too loose to distinguish between enantiomers."

His scientific work was dedicated mainly to the chromatographic separation of enantiomers of amino acids, peptides and chiral hydrocarbons (e.g. helicenes). Besides being a scientist, he was an educator. Many Ph.D. students and postdoctoral fellows (including myself) profited from his scientific guidance. He was a member of the editorial boards of several scientific journals. Because of his contributions to the field, Dr. Gil-Av was the recipient of the Chirality Gold Medal in 1991.

His legacy will live forever through his former students and post docs, and his contributions will always be remembered and valued.

Rahway, NJ, USA

Nelu Grinberg