

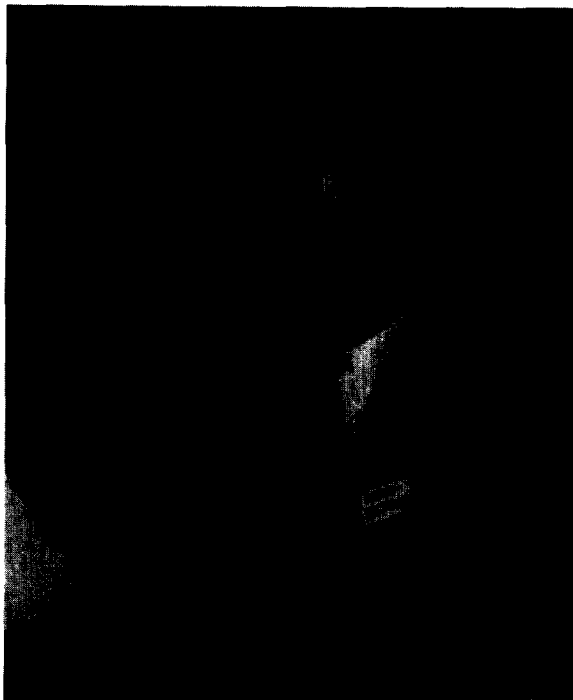


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Obituary



Prof. G.B. Marini-Bettólo
12 July 1915–22 July 1996

In 1951 the International Congress of Biochemistry was held in Paris and my cousin Edgar Lederer invited his friends to a garden party in his home in Sceaux one afternoon. That is where I met Prof. Marini-Bettólo who was there with one of his colleagues (Prof.) Sandro Ballio and Mrs. Ballio

from the Istituto Superiore di Sanità. It was the beginning of a life-long friendship. I had come to Europe from Australia recently and he had only just come back from South America where he had been professor in Santiago de Chile (1947–48) and in Montevideo (1950).

We met again in Rome and in Paris soon afterwards and initiated joint work in the application of electrophoresis, ion-exchange papers and counter-current extraction to the separation of curare alkaloids. Working with him was always exhilarating as he had a child-like enthusiasm for all things new in science. Prof. Marini-Bettólo was a universal scientist, a walk through ancient Rome with him was as exciting as a day spent in the maremma looking for interesting plants. He had worked on history (of the pharmacopoeia), on botany, organic chemistry, environmental chemistry although the main topic of his 400 research papers was natural product chemistry.

He became a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Chromatography* at its foundation in 1958 and contributed one of the important reviews to its first volume (with G.C. Casinovi) as well as numerous papers later on.

For seven difficult years (1964–1971) he directed the Istituto Superiore di Sanità and by organising symposia and lecture courses made it one of the

important centres of study in the field of separation science. During that period he was also put in charge of organising the chemistry department of the new medical faculty of the Catholic University in Rome and became its first chemistry professor (1961–1984).

In 1981 he was elected president of the 'Accademia Nazionale delle Scienze detta dei XL' and later president of the 'Pontificia Accademia delle Scienze' (1988–1993).

The last years of his life were sad. He had suffered a cerebral haemorrhage on the way to a meeting in Heidelberg. He recovered very well and edited several volumes. However he slowly wasted away, presumably the illness and the operation had taxed his body too much.

He will be missed not only by his wife Luisa, his four children and many grandchildren but by all his many friends throughout the world.

Lausanne, Switzerland

Michael Lederer