

Obituary

Zdeněk Deyl (1934–2005)



Professor Zdeněk Deyl suddenly passed away on 13 February 2005. His name is closely connected with the *Journal of Chromatography* for which he has been active for many years. The chromatography community remembers him not only for his many publications but also for interesting scientific and non-scientific discussions at international symposia, where his outstanding personality came to full expression. Zdeněk had an extraordinary social talent, he was an excellent companion, always smiling and full of jokes. It was a pleasure to follow his ironical remarks which could not only be heard in his lectures, but also appear in some published reviews, for example his chapter “A Czech’s Life in Separation Science” in the book edited by H.J. Issaq (*A Century of Separation Science*, New York, 2001). He was well-liked by his internal as well as external collaborators, and he was always prepared to help someone when needed. Zdeněk loved travelling, the history of cars and his dog Carin. Carin’s photograph was on his desk together with

the poster “The more people I know, the more I like my dog”.

Zdeněk Deyl was born on 7 January 1934 in Prague, Czech Republic. He graduated in organic chemistry in 1957, received his Ph.D. in biochemistry in 1960 at the Technical University in Prague, and his Ph.D. in physiology at Charles University, also in Prague. He was a post-doctoral fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, USA between 1965 and 1966. During 1968 and 1969 and also between 1983 and 1984 he was on leave at the Department of Biochemistry, School of Medicine, Boston University, USA. In 1982 and 1985 he attended the Department of Biochemistry, University of Oulu, Finland. From 1966 till 1990 he was head of the Department of Extracellular Matrix Physiology, Institute of Physiology, Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic. Scientific and editorial activities were not enough for his capability and therefore after the velvet revolution in Czechoslovakia, he was Director of the Department for International Affairs, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports from 1990 till 1992. In October 1992 he returned to the Institute of Physiology and continued to lead the Department. From 1994 he was Professor at the Institute of Analytical Chemistry, Institute of Technology, Prague. He also lectured regularly at the University of Verona, Italy.

Together with Professor I.M. Hais, I founded the Chromatography section of the Czechoslovak Chemical Society in 1960 and Zdeněk joined in 1967. He cooperated in the organization of thirteen international symposia, the first one being held in 1961. These symposia were originally devoted to planar chromatography but later to all separation techniques, under the title *Biomedical Applications of Chromatography and Electrophoresis*. After my retirement in 1990 he acted as chairman of the Section for Chromatography and Electrophoresis of the Czech Chemical Society, and since 1995 he continued to organize our symposia on separation methods in biomedicine. Together with Professor M. Adam he was founder of the European Connective Tissue Society. It is, of course, not possible to mention here all his activities in this field.

The research activities of Zdeněk were oriented in two directions. First, topical research on connective tissue physiology and chemistry, with particular interest in cross-linking mechanisms. Secondly, methodology, because to solve all the problems encountered, perfect separation and identification techniques were needed. He started, of course, to study chromatographic and later electrophoretic methods. His first interest was planar chromatography. But separations with this method were time-consuming and therefore in the late 1960s he described the technique of centrifugal TLC. The method was superseded by high-performance column liquid chromatography which he perfected for the separation of polypeptide compounds using gel permeation chromatography, biospecific affinity chromatography, open tubular electrochromatography and microemulsion electrokinetic chromatography. From 1986 he concentrated on the use and refinement of electrophoretic techniques for the problems of peptide and protein separation and identification. His group was mainly interested in various aspects of capillary electrophoresis, e.g., surface-modified capillaries, evaluation of electropherograms by multivariable mathematical–statistical methods, quantitative structure-retention relationships and many others. All these techniques were used in topical research which started in the 1960s with the separation and identification of collagen peptides and their fragments. These problems were solved first in cooperation with Dr. J. Rosmus

and later with Professor M. Adam and Professor I. Mikšík. For years they dealt with nonenzymatically created cross-linking affected by various factors and with aging mechanisms with special emphasis upon aging of the extracellular matrix. The significance of Professor Deyl's work in connective tissue physiology and chemistry and in separation methods is demonstrated by the publication of more than 220 original papers. He wrote four monographs and edited 15 multi-author books. He also published 29 chapters in books edited by others.

His great activity was connected, of course, with the *Journal of Chromatography*. In 1968 he became co-editor of the Bibliography Section of the journal, from 1977 he was Editorial Board member of *Journal of Chromatography*, *Biomedical Applications* (later *Journal of Chromatography B*, JCB), from 1981 editor of the News and Book Reviews sections of JCB, from 1987 Annual Review Volume editor of JCB, from 1989 Editorial Board member of *Journal of Chromatography* and from 1991 Symposium Volumes co-editor (together with Dr. Erich Heftmann).

His death is a great loss to the chromatographic community. But Zdeněk will remain in our hearts, for scientific and organizational work and especially for his personality.

Prague, Czech Republic

Karel Macek