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In Memoriam
MARCEL J. E. GOLAY



Dr. Marcel J. E. Golay, a scientist known worldwide for his work in information theory, optics and scientific instrumentation, died suddenly on April 27, 1989, just one week prior to his 87th birthday, at his home in La Conversion, Switzerland.

M. J. E. Golay was born on May 3, 1902, in Neuchatel, Switzerland. After studying at the local Gymnase, he matriculated at the Eidgenossische Technische Hochschule (E. T. H.), the Swiss Federal Technical University, in Zurich. He graduated in 1924 with a degree in electrical engineering. After graduating, he joined Bell Laboratories in the United States. In 1928, he left Bell to pursue graduate studies in physics at the University of Chicago where he received a Ph.D. in 1931 with a thesis in atomic physics. Following graduation, he joined the U. S. Signal Corps Engineering Labs, at that time one of the largest research centers in electronics and communications.

In 1955, Dr. Golay retired from the Signal Corps and became a consultant to the Philco Corporation in network and information theory, and to the Perkin-Elmer Corporation in scientific instrumentation. In 1961-62, he was professor at the Technische Hogeschool, the University of Technology in Eindhoven, The Netherlands. From 1963 until the day of his death, he had been a Senior Research Scientist at Perkin-Elmer.

Dr. Golay's achievements are wide ranging, encompassing a number of scientific fields. In radio communications, he is, perhaps, best known for the invention of the Golay delay line. In information theory and pattern recognition, his name will always be associated with the perfect binary and ternary codes, the only two multi-error correction codes ever found, with the concept of complimentary codes which are still used worldwide in Loran C precision radio navigation systems, with GLOPR (the Golay Logic Processor) for selective image data extraction and with the development of a number of other image signal processing analysis programs.

In the field of scientific instrumentation, Dr. Golay's major achievement was the development of a detector for infrared spectroscopy, the most sensitive room-temperature detector performing essentially to theoretical limits across a wide spectral range. In NMR spectroscopy, Dr. Golay invented a mathematically elegant system to improve resolution.

One of Dr. Golay's best known achievements is in the field of gas chromatography: the open tubular, capillary column. He also developed a full theoretical treatment to describe the chromatographic separation process. He also has major contributions to the area of sample introduction in gas chromatography. His treatment, together with John Atwood, of the dispersion of an injected sample at the beginning of a chromatographic system has had important implications in high-speed liquid chromatography. During the last months before his death, he was studying, in cooperation with Dr. Carl Cramers of Eindhoven University of Technology, certain questions related to turbulent flow and its chromatographic implications.

Dr. Golay was the author of more than 90 scientific papers and received 41 patents. He received numerous awards in many areas of scientific endeavor, but it is particularly notable that he — a non-chemist — was the recipient of two national American Chemical Society awards: the A.C.S. Award in Chemical Instrumentation (1961) and the A.C.S. Award in Chromatography (1981). In spite of his advanced age, he was not retired; he was still an active employee of Perkin-Elmer. In fact, at the time of

his death, he was preparing his lecture planned for the forthcoming Tenth International Symposium on Capillary Chromatography to be held May 21-25, 1989, in Riva del Garda, Italy.

Dr. Golay was probably the last polyhistor among us who could discuss astronomy, radar, chromatography and literature on equal level.

An era has ended!