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Albert I. Meyers

Albert I. Meyers, outspoken advocate for the importance of organic synthesis in modern science and society, outgoing, friendly and flamboyant to the end, died on October 23, 2007. Al was born in New York City on November 22, 1932, and grew up in the city. He earned his bachelor's degree in 1954 from New York University and pursued his Ph.D. at the same institution under the direction of Professor Ritter, of Ritter Reaction fame. He earned his degree in 1957. He began his academic career in 1958 at Louisiana State University in New Orleans, and remained there until 1970, when he took a professorship at Wayne State University. In the interim he was an NIH special Postdoctoral fellow at Harvard with Professor E. J. Corey for the period 1965–1966.

After a very short stay at Wayne State, he joined the faculty at Colorado State University in 1972 as professor of chemistry and was instrumental in building the organic program at that institution, through his outstanding science, his personal contacts, and his outgoing and embracing personality. He was selfless in the pursuit of excellence and, at every opportunity, did what was best for the department, not necessarily what was best for himself. In 1986, he was named a University Distinguished Professor, and he held the John K. Stille endowed chair from 1993 to 2002. Upon his retirement, the Albert I. Meyers chair in synthetic organic chemistry was established at Colorado State University to honor his contributions to the department over the course of his 30 years there.

Al was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1994 and earned the American Chemical Society (ACS) Award for Creative Work in Synthetic Chemistry in 1985, an ACS Arthur C. Cope Scholar Award in 1987, the Yamada Prize in 1996, and the International Award in Heterocyclic Chemistry in 1997, among many other awards. These were in recognition of his work in synthetic methodology, total synthesis, and heterocyclic chemistry.

Al was a senior consultant at a number of pharmaceutical companies including Bristol-Meyers Squibb, Roche, and Glaxo Smith Kline and was a member of the scientific advisory board of a number of biotech companies. He was an associate editor of JACS from 1980 to 1984.

During his career, he directed the Ph.D theses of over 80 graduate students and directed postdoctoral research for over 200 Ph.D.'s. In addition, his door was always open to discuss chemistry or anything else with students and colleagues alike.





Al and his wife Joan

Al's wife of 50 years, Joan, a talented artist, one of whose paintings graced the cover of *The Journal of Organic Chemistry* (2005, issue 16), died of cancer shortly after Al's death. They are sorely missed and are survived by a son, Harold, two daughters, Jill Bombell and Lisa Thompson, and seven grandchildren.

Louis Hegedus

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September 10, 2008

JO802002X