

OBITUARY



PROFESSOR GASTON PATRIARCHE

Professor Gaston J. Patriarche of the Institut de Pharmacie at Université Libre de Bruxelles passed away suddenly on 11 March 1991, one day after his 61st birthday. He was a world leader in electroanalytical and pharmaceutical chemistry.

Born in Obaix-Buzet, Belgium, he studied pharmacy at Université Libre de Bruxelles, and became a pharmacist in 1956. He continued his studies with Professor Louis Maricq in the analytical chemistry department of the Institut de Pharmacie at ULB, where he became interested in electroanalytical chemistry, and was awarded the Ph.D. degree in Pharmaceutical Sciences in 1963. He continued his studies at Saclay, France where he earned the Radioelements Manipulator degree.

His outstanding accomplishments as a student led to his appointment, in 1964, as Principal Assistant at his alma mater where he spent his entire academic career. His interests in electroanalytical chemistry continued, and he rapidly gained worldwide recognition for his introduction of electrochemical techniques for solving pharmaceutical problems. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1969 and Professor in 1977. Visits to his laboratory always revealed state-of-the-art electroanalytical facilities, and he has trained dozens of pharmaceutical/analytical students in the skillful art of electroanalytical techniques—his influence has been widely felt.

His early work included the development of coulometric titration techniques in pharmaceutical sciences. His work in polarography and voltammetry at solid state electrodes allowed him to elucidate complex electrochemical and chemical kinetic reactions of important pharmaceutical compounds. In recent years, he developed a number of innovative modified electrodes, including the graphite spray electrode and the lipid modified electrode. His earlier work, in particular, was influenced by his close association with Professor James J. Lingane at Harvard University, with whom he was Research Associate in 1966 and 1969 and Visiting Professor in 1976. His publications in scientific journals and book chapters total more than 250. He was frequently invited as a speaker throughout the world.

Professor Patriarche's many accomplishments are reflected in part by the numerous

professional recognitions and awards he received. He was the youngest member to have been elected to the Belgian Royal Academy of Medicine (an honor which, he confided in his usual jovial way, meant attending meetings on weekends!). He was awarded the Quinquennial Prize of that Academy, and the Doctor Honoris Causa of the Complutense University of Madrid. He was past-president of the Belgian Society of Pharmaceutical Sciences and of the Analytical Section of the Belgian Royal Chemical Society. He served on the editorial boards of several journals, including *Analytical Letters*, *Clinical Letters*, *Electroanalytical Abstracts*, the *Journal of Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Analysis*, the *Journal de Pharmacie de Belgique*, and *Trends in Analytical Chemistry*. He was the European Regional Editor for *Electroanalysis* since its inauguration in 1989.

He served on scientific committees of numerous international congresses, including the International Scientific Committee of the well-known series of International Symposia on drug analysis held in Belgium.

Professor Patriarche was a member of the Analytical Division of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, the Electrochemical Society, the International Society for Electrochemistry, the Society for Electroanalytical Chemistry, and the American Chemical Society. He was fond of attending ACS meetings, where he often made presentations and presided over sessions, and we were looking forward to his attendance and presentation at the April meeting in Atlanta. He served as a member of the Scientific Council of the Belgian Department of Drug Control and of the Commission of the Belgian Pharmacopoeia.

Gaston Patriarche was a close personal friend and colleague. I first met him in 1964 at the University of Maryland during his tour through the United States, and our friendship continued ever since. A highlight of my life and career was the year spent in his laboratory in 1978–79. Our collaborations have continued over the years, and my visits to his laboratory or his visits to mine, or meeting at a scientific conference always meant working furiously on a manuscript. He was popular among his students, even though he was a demanding taskmaster with high standards. His laboratory always had several visiting scientists or students from around the world.

Gaston Patriarche was truly a great man, both in the physical sense and in his personal and professional life. He enjoyed life to its fullest. Those who knew him will remember his jovial nature, his wine cellar, his Alfa Romeos (driven a little too fast), his Harvard ties, his “American martinis” (very dry), and his Godiva Belgian Chocolates (our favourite Christmas present every year). A visit to his home always meant a gourmet meal and a bit too much fine wine. He was devoted to his wife Nanette and his sons Phillipe and François and their families. We shall all miss him dearly, but all who knew him will always remember the many fine moments spent with him and his many contributions to science, teaching, family and friends.

Gary D. Christian
Department of Chemistry
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington, USA

I thank Dr Jean-Claude Viré for providing much of the information about Professor Patriarche’s educational and professional life.