

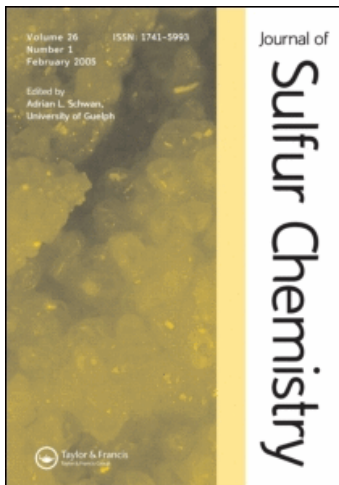
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### Professor Noël Lozac'h in memoriam

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## OBITUARY

# PROFESSOR NOËL LOZAC'H IN MEMORIAM

GERARD LECOUSTUMER<sup>a</sup>, YVES MOLLIER<sup>a</sup> and CARL TH. PEDERSEN<sup>b</sup>

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One of the central figures in French and international sulfur chemistry in the mid-20th century, Professor Noël Lozac'h of Caen, passed away on June 20, 2003 at the age of 88.

Noël Lozac'h was born in Nantes, France in 1915. He went to Paris and began his scientific career there after leaving the l'Ecole Normale Supérieure with the grade 1<sup>er</sup> à l'Agrégation de Sciences Physique in 1939. He became assistant professor at the l'Ecole Normal in Professor G. Dupont's group, where he prepared his thesis on  $\gamma$ -acetylenic glycols and their derivatives, which he defended in 1945. Subsequently, he held positions at l'Université de Lille and l'Université de Paris before becoming Maître de Conférences at the Faculty of Sciences at the University of Caen in 1949 – a position just below a full professor. He became a full professor in 1952, a position he held until his retirement in 1982. He was active in the creation of the new university buildings in Caen; their old buildings had been destroyed during the Allied landing in 1944.

Along with his scientific career Professor Lozac'h was an able administrator. He became director of l'Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Chimie de Caen (1952), until the foundation of l'Institut des Sciences de la Matière et du Rayonnement (ISMRA) in 1969, and was nominated

director of this institution until he retired (1982). He was also Dean of the Faculty of Sciences (1956–1969).

Professor Lozac'h is the father of sulfur chemistry at the University of Caen, where he created a very active group that multiplied over the years, with three more groups under Professors Yves Mollier, André Thuillier and Jean Vialle. These were associated under CNRS as Laboratoire de Chimie Moléculaire et Thioorganique. Sulfur chemistry has spread from Caen to many other parts of France with the numerous graduates from Caen. He was a great inspiration in the development of sulfur chemistry in France, both at universities and in industry.

Professor Lozac'h was honoured Commandeur des Palmes Académiques in 1960, Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur in 1963, and in 1975 he was awarded the Médaille Berthelot de l'Académie des Sciences for his scientific work.

He was the president of the 3rd International Symposium on Organic Chemistry of Sulfur in Caen 1968 – a particularly difficult job as the symposium took place in May 1968 during a major strike in French universities.

He authored more than 150 publications on sulfur chemistry. His main research interest was in heterocyclic sulfur compounds and thiones, in particular those related to the 1,2-dithiole system. By introducing the concept of no-bond-single-bond resonance he explained the special bonding properties of trithiapentalenes and related compounds, such as thiapyrane derivatives, and thus presented the background to understanding the chemistry of such linear multisulfur compounds. Benzothiazines comprise another large group of compounds he studied, in collaboration with Louis Legrand. A more detailed survey of his contributions to sulfur chemistry can be found in his scientific autobiography in *Sulfur Reports*, **9**, 153 (1989).

Professor Lozac'h's also showed a great interest in nomenclature. He was member of the IUPAC Commission on Nomenclature of Organic Chemistry during 1953–1979 (as chairman in 1971–1977). In 1967 he published *La Nomenclature de Chimie Organique*, a book in French that explains the use of the IUPAC nomenclature rules. He made great efforts to introduce the so-called nodal nomenclature, where the basic idea is to define, in the first instance, a molecular skeleton without saying anything about the nature of the bonds.

One of us (CThP) spent a year in Professor Lozac'h's group (1968–1969) and came to know him both as a great sulfur chemist and as a very hospitable host when invited, at that time and during numerous later visits to Caen, to his home together with his large family.