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People in the News

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

The following is extracted with permission from the principal newspaper of Tbilisi, Georgia, *Sakartvelos Respublika*, Tuesday 29 July 1997.

Professor Guram Chilaya, the founder of the Georgian Liquid Crystal School was born sixty years ago into the family of the famous Georgian writer Sergi Chilaya. Guram Chilaya graduated from the Tbilisi first school with a gold medal, and graduated in solid state physics with honours from the Physical Faculty of Georgian State University. His postgraduate studies (1960–1963) were carried out at the Moscow Lebedev Institute of Physics, and in 1967 he defended the Candidate Degree on the subject of electroluminescence of ZnS single crystals. During the years 1968–1971 Chilaya was working in the Moscow Institute of Organic Intermediates and Dyes (NIOPIK), and here he began to study liquid crystals and published his first paper on electro-optics in chiral (cholesteric) liquid crystals. In 1972 Chilaya returned to Tbilisi to the Institute of Cybernetics of the Georgian Academy of Science and became leader of a scientific group, which became the Department of Optically Controlled Anisotropic Systems. He remained Head of this Department for more than 25 years, and during this period many scientific researches were conducted under his direct guidance. In 1983 Chilaya defended his doctoral degree and in 1984 became a Professor of Solid

Professor Guram Chilaya, Founder of Georgian Liquid Crystal School, Celebrates his Sixtieth Birthday

State Physics. The group of scientists headed by Chilaya was awarded in 1989 the Georgian State Prize in the field of Science and Technology for their investigations on 'Induced Chiral Liquid Crystal Structures in Optical Data Processing Systems'. Chilaya has published almost 200 papers, 3 monographs and 10 patents, and in 1981 he organized in Tbilisi the IVth International Conference of Socialist Countries on Liquid Crystal, which attracted many well-known liquid crystal scientists from both the West and East. Chilaya and his colleagues now have many collaborations with foreign



scientists and participate in joint research with them. The whole Scientific Community congratulates Batono (Mister) Guram Chilaya on his sixtieth birthday, and wishes him happiness and health, we hope he will continue to make his important contributions to the development of Science in Georgia.

Contribution from: JUMBER LOMINADZE, *Academician, Academic-Secretary of Physical and Mathematical Department of the Georgian Academy of Science.*

GURAM CHARATISHVILI, *Academician, the Director of the Institute of Cybernetics of the Georgian Academy of Science.*

COMPANY NEWS

Managing Director of Merck Ltd, Bob O'Connell, announced on 28 November 1997, that Merck would close its West Quay Road manufacturing plant, which has been in Poole for more than 50 years.

Intense competition in manufacturing from Asia, particularly China, has meant that Merck Ltd's liquid crystal business has been under pressure for some time. With no significant recovery foreseen in the near future, Merck was forced to review its liquid crystal business in the UK, and there appeared to be no other

Intense Competition Forces Merck Plant Closure

option but to close the liquid crystal manufacturing site at West Quay Road, with effect

from the end of 1998. Under the proposal, the Research and Development Department, which has achieved world recognition over the years for its pioneering work on liquid crystals, will remain but will be relocated elsewhere. A programme to ensure continuity of supply to customers will be put into action. Merck Ltd is part of the global Merck Group and the UK subsidiary of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany.

See page 13 of this issue of *Liquid Crystals Today* for an interview with Dr A Cumming, the new Director of Merck R&D UK.