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Marius Chemla (November 1927–July 2005)

Received: 15 July 2005 / Accepted: 15 July 2005 / Published online: 5 October 2005
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It is with a great sadness that we report the passing of Marius Chemla, in July, at the age of 77. With him, we lost a leader in the field of Electrochemistry.

He received the engineer diploma from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Chimie de Paris (ENSCP) in 1949 and started a career as researcher at CNRS (French Centre for Scientific Research) in the Collège de France, laboratory of nuclear Chemistry, headed by Professor Frédéric Joliot-Curie, Nobel Prize.

His research work was devoted to the separation of isotopes by electromigration. At that time, he discovered an anomalous behaviour in the mobility of cations in molten salts. That particular property is now known as the “Chemla effect”.

After that period, he was nominated Associate Professor in Orsay University, and Professor in Paris University (1967). Thus, he became the director of the

Electrochemistry laboratory in Paris and began to carry out new projects in Electrochemistry. A large proportion of his work was made in collaboration with industrial research and development laboratories belonging to French companies.

In Paris, he created the “doctoral school of Electrochemistry”. He was considered as a skilled teacher and a stimulating supervisor for his Ph.D students (more than 50). Many of them now hold leading positions at universities, research institutions or in industry in several countries.

Besides his work in research and teaching, Professor Chemla dedicated a large amount of his time to serve the scientific community: in our university, he has been the head of the Physical Chemistry Department for many years and belonged to many commissions and councils; he acted as a very active member of several scientific societies. For example, he created the Electrochemistry group of the French Chemical Society and became its first President; he had been nominated Chairman of several international meetings.

During all his life, he promoted many international collaborations, especially with Japanese colleagues, in the field of Electrochemistry of fluorine compounds, molten salts, materials for electrochemical systems.

Professor Chemla published more than 250 scientific articles and several books. Since his retirement, 8 years ago, he was Emeritus Professor in Pierre and Marie Curie University.

He received several awards and distinctions: Pierre Sue Prize (French Chemical Society), Award of the French Academy of Science, French national medal of merit, academic palms,...

He leaves his wife, his three daughters and his nine grandchildren. For them and all his co-workers and pupils, Professor Chemla will remain unforgettable.

Didier Devilliers and Pierre Turq, Professors

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