

Klaus K. Unger 1936–2020

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Born on June 16, 1936 in Zwickau/Saxony, Klaus Unger studied chemistry at the Technical University of Darmstadt (TUD) from 1956 to 1963 and was awarded a doctorate in 1965 by Hans Wolfgang Kolschütter. Ing. PhD. In 1969, he also completed his habilitation at TUD and worked there from 1971 to 1976 as a lecturer and professor of chemistry. From 1977 until his retirement in 2001, he was Professor in the Department of Chemistry and Pharmacy (Institute for Inorganic Chemistry and Analytical Chemistry) at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. He then headed a research group in the field of bioseparation and proteomics at Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, for 8 years.

His wide-ranging research work on porous materials began during his doctorate. They include their synthesis, characterization and functionalization as well as their use as adsorbents, stationary phases in chromatography and as catalysts. While the focus was initially on silica gel ("Mr. Silica"), the range of materials investigated was subsequently expanded to include metal oxides, carbon and zeolites up to monolithic materials. The manufacturing and use of pressure-stable small particles as well as the synthesis of chemically bonded silica gel stationary phases in the 1970s were major milestones in the development of HPLC. His work on the application of HPLC on an analytical and preparative scale as well as on the separation of biopolymers has given just as important impetus as his HPLC advanced training courses and the conferences and events he has organized.

Professor Unger supervised 130 doctoral students; over 430 publications, 55 patents and 30 monographs bear his name. Professor Unger, who was affectionately known by them as "der Meister", remained on friendly terms with his doctoral students for many years. He not only taught science to numerous doctoral students and young scientists, but also shared astute wisdom with them in his unique way. He maintained extensive collaborations with specialist colleagues all over the world, which also led to several visiting professorships (Boston, Singapore, Melbourne, Lund, Utrecht, Gdansk).

In addition to working on the editorial boards of several international scientific journals, Klaus Unger was also involved in several committees, such as on the board of the working group "Separation Science" (formerly "Chromatography")

in the analytical chemistry section of the German chemical society (GDCh), German Society for Chemical Technology and biotechnology (DECHEMA) committee "Zeolites", DECHEMA section "German Zeolite Association" (first chairman) and in IUPAC committees. His scientific work has been recognized with a number of awards, such as: with the Pregl Medal of the Austrian Society for Analytical Chemistry, the AJP Martin Award of the Chromatographic Society (London), the American Chemical Society Award in Chromatography, the Clemens-Winkler-Medal of the German Chemical Society, analytical chemistry working party, the Waksmundski-Medal from the Polish Chemical Society, honorary doctorates from the Universities of Kaunas (Lithuania) and Joannina (Greece).

On October 7, 2020, Klaus Unger's fulfilled life suddenly came to an end after a short illness. With him, the Separation Science working group has lost a paternal friend and mentor, and the international chromatographic community has lost a phenomenal and unique scientist, university professor, colleague and human being.

Werner Engewald, Taucha

Stefan Lamotte, Ludwigshafen



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