

# Memory and Appreciation of Professor Bernard Delmon

From the blog of Professor Julian Ross: [www.contemporarycatalysis.wordpress.com](http://www.contemporarycatalysis.wordpress.com)

Appreciation of Professor Bernard Delmon from Professor Julian Ross, the Founding Editor of *Catalysis Today*

I was very sorry to hear of Bernard's death. He was a very great friend, always great company, and it was always a pleasure to meet him in venues all over the world.

Like Miguel and Yongdan, I can describe my early interactions with Bernard. I first met him at the second meeting on catalyst preparation held in 1978 in Louvain-la-Neuve. (He had recently moved to the then new university and many of the participants had made the mistake of travelling to Louvain instead of to the new and rather raw campus in Louvain-la-Neuve.) I had a paper at the meeting on our work on coprecipitated catalysts and he showed a lot of interest in it. (The proceedings of this meeting were published in Volume 3 of the Elsevier book series, one of Bernard's important initiatives.) Shortly after that, many of those working on heterogeneous catalysis in Europe received a letter from Tilly Sijpesteijn of Elsevier asking for opinions regarding a proposal emanating from Bernard to launch a new journal on catalysis. I replied to that very enthusiastically because I had, like many of my colleagues, become frustrated by the very protracted refereeing and editorial handling of submissions to the Journal of Catalysis. As a result, Bernard asked me to take on the task of editing the News Brief of Applied Catalysis. He invited me to visit him in Louvain-la-Neuve in 1979 to discuss how it would be set up and I travelled there with my family in a camper-van en route to another visit in France. Bernard was a wonderful host, paying great attention to our three small boys, and I then saw for the first time his great love of good wine! His vision of what News Brief could contain helped me establish it as something to which many people contributed enthusiastically and Bernard continued to support me as its editor for many years. It was his broader vision of the needs of the heterogeneous catalysis community that later led to him asking me to edit *Catalysis Today*, the first issues of which were devoted to a meeting on catalytic oxidation organised by Bernard and held in Louvain-la-Neuve in 1986. You all know how that journal has developed. None of this could have happened without Bernard's vision.

Posted on April 17, 2020

An Appreciation of Bernard Delmon by Prof. Yongdan Li of Aalto University, Finland

When Prof. Li heard of Bernard Delmon's death, he wrote the following appreciation:

I have a special memory of him. It was 1990, just after the student movement in Beijing in 1989, in the March, and I had just finished my Ph.D. The governor limited us for going abroad for work; thus I had to give up an opportunity to go the US, somewhere in Alabama, for a post-doc. Fortunately it was still possible to go out of the country for conferences. Thus I attended the Symposium of Scientific Basis for the Preparation of Catalysts. However, at that moment, I could not get funding from any source in China, and my salary as a lecturer was only equivalent to 10 USD. Thus I wrote to Professor Delmon to ask for some support. He waived my registration fee and even supplied my lodging on the campus dormitory. The trip was thus possible, but I came Belgium by train, just one week for the one-way trip. That trip also enabled me to go the lab of Julian Ross and then I spent more than 2 years as post-doc in Twente and Nancy.

Over the following years, I attended the Symposia of Catalyst Preparation until before the last time. Also, after I got a chair at Tianjin University, I hosted Professor Delmon in Tianjin and also nominated him as an consultant of a UNIDO program for 5 years with the Tianjin Research Institute of Petroleum Processing. During that period and before his retirement, he visited Tianjin a number of times.

Sadly, following Prof. Delmon's retirement, my friends at Louvain-la-Neuve, Grange and Poncelet, both passed away very early. Hence, since the 10th Symposium, I have not returned to Louvain-la-Neuve.

#### An Appreciation of Bernard Delmon by Professor Miguel Banares

I've just learnt that Prof. Bernard Delmon died this week. You know better than I do that he was a most influential person in the catalysis community, for Elsevier and for *Catalysis Today*.

I did not have the chance to have much interaction with him, but he was always a very gentle person. I do recall one very interesting anecdote, back in 1992. I defended my thesis in Salamanca University. Since it is a very old university, established in 1218, I wanted to defend my thesis in the old university building rather than in the School of Chemistry. On one of the days before the 1992 Segovia Iberoamerican conference, I was defending my PhD in Salamanca, in the ancient University building. The lecture room, typically open for tourists, was closed for my academic occasion. As often happened, a tourist didn't see the signal and entered the room; it was Professor Delmon. It was an amazing experience: me talking about molybdena on silica and Prof. Delmon entering in the room during my defense. He immediately realized of his mistake, apologized and stepped out. It is a moment that I recall with special sympathy. Delmon was a plenary speaker at the Iberoamerican conference, but I was embarrassed to tell to him at that moment. I told him about this years later, and he did remember accidentally breaking into a PhD defense during his visit to Salamanca University's old building, but he didn't realise it was mine.

Prof. Dr. Miguel A. BAÑARES

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#### Bernard Delmon (1933 – 2020)

I am sad to have to record the death of a very important figure in the world of heterogeneous catalysis, Bernard Delmon. The following notice of his death has been received from Eric Gaineaux of the University of Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve), Belgium.

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Our colleague, Professor Bernard Delmon passed away on Tuesday April 7 (not from Coronavirus) at the age of 87. Full professor at UCLouvain (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium), he has been a major player in the development of heterogeneous catalysis, publishing 18 books and several hundreds of articles. He was doctor honoris causa of the University of Patras (Greece), founder of the journals "Applied Catalysis", "Catalysis Today" and of the series "Studies in Surface Science and Catalysis", initiator of several series of international congresses still running today, member of the Royal Academy of

Belgium and had been president of the European Federation of Chemical Engineering. In 1992, he received the prestigious “Alexander Von Humbolt” award. Professor Emeritus of the Faculty of Bioengineers of UCLouvain since 1997, he has inspired generations of students and researchers and founded the research group on heterogeneous catalysis still active nowadays in Louvain-la-Neuve.

May Professor Delmon rest in peace.

The current circumstances related to the pandemic, we will organize in a soon future a way to honor the memory of Professor Delmon.

Eric Gaigneaux, Patricio Ruiz, Michel Devillers, Damien Debecker, Sophie Hermans