



IN MEMORIAM PROF. IOAN SILAGHI-DUMITRESCU (1950 – 2009)

On December 25, 2009, Dr. Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu, Professor of Inorganic Chemistry and Dean of the Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering of “Babes-Bolyai” University in Cluj-Napoca, passed away prematurely.

Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu was born at Botiz, Satu Mare County, on June 1, 1950. He earned his baccalaureate in 1969, from “Mihai Eminescu” High School in Satu Mare. In the same year, he became a student at the Faculty of Chemistry of “Babes-Bolyai” University, in Cluj-Napoca, where he showed a great passion for chemistry, profound knowledge and a single-minded dedication to science. He performed undergraduate research under the direction of the late Professor Victor Neagu, a former pupil of Nobel Prize winner Roald Hoffmann. Hence, Professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu can be considered Roald Hoffmann’s second generation student. He graduated in 1973, after having finished a one-year specialization in Inorganic Chemistry and in computer science.



Mandatory at the time, he had to complete an industrial internship, working for four years at the Fine Ceramics Factory in Cluj-Napoca (1974-1978). Thereafter, he returned to the Inorganic Chemistry Department of “Babes-Bolyai” University, first as a doctoral candidate and then becoming Professor Ionel Haiduc’s main co-worker.

In 1981, Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu earned a Ph.D. degree in Inorganic Chemistry, his graduate work being advised by Professor Ionel Haiduc. His dissertation entitled “The use of the FELIX C-256 computer for determining the structural parameters of phosphorous-organic compounds,” represented one of the first significant computer-based works in Romania.

Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu became Assistant Professor (1980), Associate Professor (1990) and eventually full Professor (1995). He was the Head of the Inorganic Chemistry Department (in 1992-1995 and 1997-2007). In 2007, Professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu was elected Dean of the Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering of “Babes-Bolyai” University.

Professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu’s prodigious scientific career encompasses several research areas, listed here in chronological order: organometallic chemistry, coordination chemistry, computational chemistry, molecular structure investigation and molecular modeling.

Over the past years his activity was mainly focused on the molecular structure and modeling of post-transition element clusters, transition metal organometallic clusters, cumulenes and heterocumulenes containing heavy elements, inorganic nanotubes and calixarenes. Professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu created a significant school of molecular structure and modeling at Cluj-Napoca. Thus, in 2001, he initiated the Molecular Structure and Dynamics Center, which has developed continuously, becoming in 2007 the Center of Molecular Modeling and Quantum Computational Chemistry. The core of this center is the Molecular Modeling Laboratory, which has a remarkable ISI research team, its name being an acronym of its mentor. Professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu has initiated and organized three International Conferences on Molecular Modeling MOLMOD (2005, 2007 and 2009), all hosted by “Babes-Bolyai” University.

The results of Professor’s Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu work were disclosed in 186 peer-reviewed scientific publications, many of them being published in prestigious journals, such as the *Journal of the American*

Chemical Society, Inorganic Chemistry, Chemical Communications, Journal of the Chemical Society, Dalton Transactions and others.

Starting 1992, Professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu was offered several research internships and he lectured as an invited visiting Professor at several universities, such as University of Nottingham (host: Prof. D. Bryan Sowerby), University of Heidelberg (Prof. Rolf Gleiter), National Autonomous University of Mexico (Dr. Francesco Lara-Ochoa), University of Georgia (Prof. R. Bruce King and Prof. Henry F. Schaefer). Over these research stays, he has established a large number of successful collaborations with outstanding personalities of contemporary science and famous research teams from different countries. These ties yielded efficient collaborations and important scientific results.

Professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu was the Project Manager of many national and international research projects on various topics. He advised 25 doctoral students, out of whom 13 have already earned their Ph.D. degree in chemistry. Professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu was a member of the Roumanian Chemical Society and of the American Chemical Society.

Professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu was awarded the “Gheorghe Spacu” Prize of the Roumanian Academy for his research on molecular structure and topology (1989). As a recognition of his outstanding contributions to chemical research, Professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu was elected in 2006 a Corresponding Member of the Roumanian Academy.

Professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu was a greatly appreciated educator and mentor of many generations of students. He was a true scientist, beloved by his disciples, respected by colleagues, highly esteemed by his collaborators and appreciated by all those who knew him.

Professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu's death represents a great loss for the Roumanian science, as well as for the Roumanian and international chemistry research. His memory will remain vivid in our souls.

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