



Professor Mihaela HILLEBRAND



PROFESSOR MIHAELA HILLEBRAND AT HER 80th ANNIVERSARY

On the occasion of her 80th birthday, *Revue Roumaine de Chimie* celebrates the long fruitful career of Professor Mihaela Hillebrand, corresponding member of the Roumanian Academy. Prof. Hillebrand has always discouraged such formal honours, so this comes as nothing less than a token of appreciation.

Born in 1941 in Bucharest, she enrolled at the Faculty of Chemistry of the University of Bucharest in 1957, where she graduated from in 1962 with a specialization in Physical Chemistry. The same year she started her academic carrier as a young Teaching Assistant in the Department of Physical Chemistry at the Faculty of Chemistry, where she dedicated to students and science alike a lifetime of enthusiastic work. She rose to prominence and appreciation in this department, up to being granted a Full Professorship, then a Professor Emeritus title in 2009. She was Invited Professor a number of times at Université de Provence, Aix Marseille I, France and University of Boulder, Colorado, USA. She holds several awards, among which the Roumanian Academy Award won in 1993 and the Award of the Roumanian Chemical Society in 2004. In prize of her outstanding activity Prof. Hillebrand was elected as a correspondent member of the Roumanian Academy in 2014, where she serves as the President of the Quantum Chemistry and Spectroscopy Commission.

Prof. Hillebrand achieved excellence in both research and teaching. Her dual approach of molecular structure through experiment and theory comes from an established tradition at the Department of Physical Chemistry and at the same time opened up new perspectives on what concerns the chemistry of radicals, excited states of organic compounds and intermolecular interactions, some of her main research directions. She put together in a melting pot quantum chemistry and spectroscopy methods in an endeavour of rationalizing molecular properties. To this end, she fully equipped and ran a state-of-the-art spectroscopy laboratory at the Department of Physical Chemistry.

Prof. Hillebrand inspired generations of students with her knowledgeable and self-consistent lectures on Molecular Structure and Quantum Chemistry. To the *Ph.D.* students she mentored in this field of research she taught by example that principles are fundamental and science is serious business, better done for fun. In fact, leading by example was her method, as her co-workers can testify.

Her long-lasting collaboration with Université de Provence, Aix-Marseille I, France gave birth to the first Francophone series of lectures entitled “Spectrochimie et Réactivité Chimique”, that constituted the nucleus of the master’s program “Chimie Organique Physique” at the Faculty of Chemistry. Here students had great opportunities of doing collaborative research work in Bucharest and Marseille at a time when studying abroad was a distant possibility.

Prof. Hillebrand has never said no to a scientific or teaching challenge. She has also served as a long-term preparatory teacher for the Romanian team at the International Chemistry Olympiad, where high-school students could encounter and learn the rigour of molecular structure for the first time and be drawn to it.

“Molecules are not insane” is one of Prof. Hillebrand's staple sayings. Colleagues, collaborators and former students, we all wish her a merry life and serious science made for fun. May one of those wise molecular systems always come her way!

The Editorial Board

