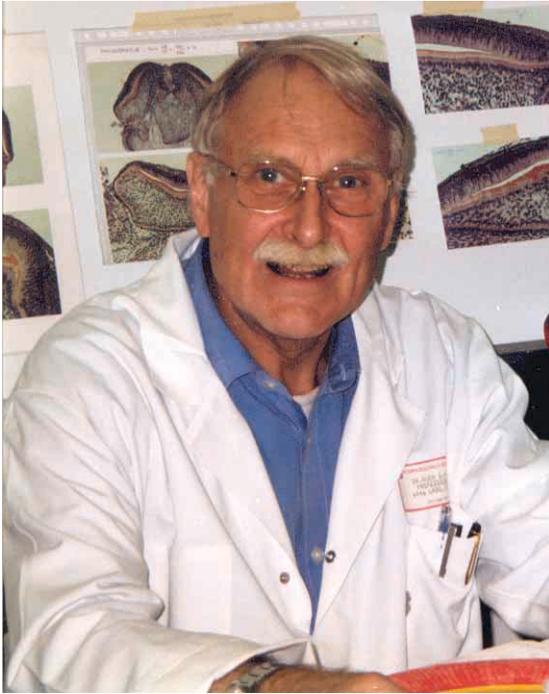


IN MEMORIAM



Professor Jean-Victor Ruch (1935-2003)

J.V. Ruch

achievements will not be enumerated here: he can be heard saying *"this would not interest anyone"*. He loved challenges, one of which was to create a forum for the open exchange of ideas. After an initial attempt during the first Tooth Morphogenesis and Differentiation meeting in 1978, a COST project was initiated in 1995. This was the first step to facilitate exchanges amongst odontogenesis researchers at least within Europe. He was happy to know that a second COST project would come soon and his main goal in this regard was to extend such cooperation beyond Europe with inexpensive meetings in which young researchers could easily participate. Encouragement of activity among young researchers was a priority for Jean-Victor and he was always quick to recognize the potential of fresh, young minds to transcend traditional scientific boundaries.

Jean-Victor not only published many scientific papers; he also helped others to publish, by generously, rigorously, efficiently and fairly refereeing innumerable manuscripts, offering his insightful suggestions and constructive recommendations. He was a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of *The International Journal of Developmental Biology* from its very beginning and tirelessly promoted the journal among his colleagues. The Special Issue of the journal entitled "Odontogenesis" was exquisitely edited by him. It quickly sold-out and was even translated into Japanese as a foundation textbook for university students.

The last paper Jean-Victor Ruch wrote was entitled *"An address to young research workers: inconsequences and blindness to the facts and unpublished observations"*. There he claimed: *"Since 1969, odontogenesis has held my attention completely."* However, when we could get some free time for open discussion with him, it was clear that his first priority was really his family.

The kind smile he always showed when approaching someone, which epitomised his personality, will be deeply missed, but fondly remembered, by all of us.

Jean-Victor Ruch did not come to the lab on Monday February 3, 2003 ... and will never come again. He sadly passed away leaving many things behind: projects on his desk, experiments running, disoriented colleagues and a lovely family in deep sorrow.

Jean-Victor Ruch was born on May 22, 1935. In 1958, while still studying medicine, he began, under the guidance of Prof. Clavert, what was to be a long and distinguished period of activity in research. After completing his M.D. and Ph.D, he extended his scientific formation in organotypic culture methods in the laboratory of Prof. Gaillard in Leiden. In 1969 he became Associate Professor and together with Vera Karcher, he chose the tooth as a model to study fundamental aspects of organogenesis and continued with this model throughout his research. After publishing more than 200 papers, he retired as Professor of Embryology and Director of the Institute of Medical Biology, of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Louis Pasteur (Strasbourg) in 1997. However, Jean-Victor continued to come to the lab almost daily to continue his experimental work. He particularly enjoyed the company of young researchers, before they grew older and became too rigid in their thinking. He enthusiastically shared his skilled manual talents for embryonic tooth dissection, dissociation and culture techniques. His deep knowledge of developmental biology and a very good sense in developing elegant experimental strategies were generously imparted to visiting colleagues, both young and not-so-young, who came to visit his laboratory from many countries all over the world.

Jean-Victor never searched for honors or personal gain in his career and although numerous, his personal

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