

## **Prof. D. Luc Massart**

### **1941-2005**

We regret to announce that on December, 26<sup>th</sup>, 2005, Prof. D.L. Massart, founding editor and editor-in-chief of this journal passed away in the age of 64 years after a long and serious illness.

The Chemometrics community lost a great member and pioneer, who more than thirty years ago was one of the initiators of a novel and successful science: Chemometrics.

It was in the early seventies when I met Prof. D. Luc Massart for the first time. At a meeting of the Dutch Working Party on Laboratory Optimization in Utrecht (NL), a young and enthusiastic professor from Brussels was invited and told how he applied graph theory -a method from operations research- to optimize chromatographic separations. All present hang to his lips. Here, an exceptional mind was at work looking for unconventional and novel solutions.

Right after his appointment as Director of the laboratory of Analytical Chemistry at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (1968) at the age of 27 years and later as full Professor in 1974, Prof. Massart was going to lead his laboratory to become a top knowledge center of Chemometrics in Europe. A pioneering paper "Operations Research in Analytical Chemistry" published in the A-pages of Analytical Chemistry in 1975 would be followed by over 600 scientific publications in peer reviewed journals and ten books.

Many students, teachers, academic and industrial scientists were introduced in Chemometrics by his famous books, each the result of many reading and discussion sessions of the authoring team during several years: "Evaluation and Optimisation of Laboratory Methods and Analytical Procedures" (1978), "Chemometrics, a textbook" (1988) and "Handbook of Chemometrics and Qualimetrics A and B" (1997).

Prof. Massart was a beloved invited speaker at many international congresses, symposia and schools for his lucid and clear presentations. He took the initiative for many congresses, European projects and schools. Under his inspiration the CAC (Computers and optimization in Analytical Chemistry) conferences evolved to the principal international conference on Chemometrics.

The spreading of chemometrics to the non-specialist was one of his challenging goals. His proposal for the Eurochemometrics project was granted under the EU COMETT program for the organization of many successful Chemometric Schools with an international team of teachers and chemometric experts. When Elsevier launched "Chemometrics and Intelligent Laboratory Systems" (1986), numerous tutorials, chemometrics software reviews, special issues, conference issues were published during his 18 years period of editor-in-chief.

Above all, Prof. Massart was an excellent science manager and supervisor. Three years ago we celebrated the second lustrum of the ChemoAC (Chemometrics in Analytical Chemistry) consortium which was funded by several multinationals in the food, pharmaceutical and petrochemical sectors. The biannual 2-days meetings of ChemoAC in Brussels were a great pleasure for its industrial members, but a scaring fire baptism for many PhD students when they had to present for the first time.

Many students, scientists and colleagues liked to work in his laboratory, resulting in more than 50 doctoral theses and a steadily high flow of publications.

Visionary as he was, Prof. Massart made-up his mind for his next challenge: the imbedding of ChemoAC in a Virtual Institute for Chemometrics and Industrial Metrology (VICIM). European funding was available for establishing Virtual Institutes. He looked forward to a new, exciting and fantastic period. How different fate would decide! Shortly after the kick-off meeting of VICIM in May 2002, Prof. Massart called me on a Monday morning telling me the unbelievable news of his serious illness. He personally informed all students, co-workers and colleagues. All were speechless. Despite heavy therapies and surgeries, Prof. Massart continued to fulfill his commitments to his PhD students, co-workers and colleagues with an admirable courage.

Just before last Christmas, Prof. Massart was very proud to hear from his colleague Prof. A. Smeyers-Verbeke that in honor for his work, the Belgian Chemometrics Society had instituted the International DL Massart Award in Chemometrics to be assigned every two years. Some years before, he received the prestigious Francqui Chair for teaching at the Université Libre de Bruxelles and the University of Gent. Moreover he was guest professor at the Central South University, Changsha, P.R. China.

In 2002 he became full member of the Belgian Royal Academy of Medicine after being corresponding member for some time.

Students, collaborators and colleagues from all over the world lost a great mentor, an inspired scientific leader and a dear friend.

We wish his collaborators, Prof. A. Smeyers-Verbeke and Prof. Y. van der Heijden of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel the strength and courage to continue in the footsteps of their great predecessor.

We join the mourning of his family for the loss of a beloved husband, father and grandfather.

Prof. D.L. Massart resides in the hearts of many and will survive through his published work.

Bernard Vandeginste  
VICIM