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Fred Basolo, the Charles E. and Emma H. Morrison Professor of Chemistry, Emeritus, at Northwestern University died 27 February 2007 at the age of 87. He was born 11 February 1920 in the small southern Illinois coal-mining town of Coello, the youngest son of Italian immigrants. After high school, he enrolled in Southern Illinois Normal University (now Southern Illinois University), where he received a degree in education. One of his professors, James Neckers, urged him to go to graduate school; he did, but he stayed in Illinois. He worked with one of the founders of American coordination chemistry, John C. Bailar, Jr., on the syntheses and reactions of platinum complexes. He received a doctorate from the University of Illinois in 1943.

From 1943–46, Fred worked at Rohm arid Haas on then-classified projects for the war effort; one of these was to develop a synthetic mica. In 1946 he joined the chemistry department at Northwestern University, where he was a force to be reckoned with for more than 60 years.

Fred is most famous for landmark research in collaboration with Ralph Pearson that elucidated the mechanisms of ligand substitution reactions of metal complexes in solution. Their work on the substitution reactions of octahedral cobalt(III) complexes drew them into a lively exchange with Sir Christopher Ingold, one of the pioneers of mechanistic organic chemistry. Fred and Ralph produced strong evidence that both acid and base hydrolysis reactions of Co(III) ammines occur by dissociative mechanisms, which did not please Ingold. A spirited battle ensued that was finally settled in favor of the Basolo-Pearson mechanistic proposals. Even more important was the enormous attention that Fred and Ralph enjoyed that was a direct result of their often heated discussions with Ingold. Suddenly they were major players on the chemistry stage.

Of course Fred's contributions go well beyond octahedral substitutions reactions. He and his students elucidated square planar substitution mechanisms, ring slip reactions, atom transfer processes, linkage isomerizations, CO exchanges, and on and on, all involving metal centers as the main actors. He was among the first systematically to explore reversible dioxygen binding to metal ions in simple complexes, which later became a major area of bioinorganic chemistry.

Fred was a great supporter of inorganic chemistry and inorganic chemists. He was a real trooper. He wrote reviews, edited journals, wrote countless letters, all to enhance the visibility of our field. We are very pleased that John Fackler has written in this issue about his leading role in establishing Comments as a must read journal. It is our feeling that his ideas for Comments came from the lively discussions that occurred on Saturday mornings at BIP (all active researchers in inorganic chemistry know about Fred's role in BIP). BIP (for Basolo-Ibers-Pearson) began as the joint group meeting of the Basolo and Pearson groups. Today, BIP is where informal research discussions among all of Northwestern's inorganic groups take place. And Comments is where inorganic chemists from all over the world publish their latest views on hot areas of the field.

We turn now to the honors and activities that in our view meant the most to Fred. He was particularly proud of the Gibbs Medal from the Chicago Section and the Priestley Medal, the highest ACS award. For his work on inorganic reaction mechanisms, he was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1979 and as a Foreign Member of the *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* (Italy) in 1987; he received many honorary degrees, including one from the University of Turin, in his beloved Piedmont region of Italy. He was a great fan of the Gordon Research Conferences, and he reminded us more times than we can count that he was a regular at the Inorganic GRC along with his good friends John Fackler and Bob Parry; he was chairman of the GRC Board of Trustees in 1976.

We close on a very personal note. We have lost our teacher who also was a dear friend.

Harry Gray and John Magyar
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SUGGESTED READING

1. *On Being Well-Coordinated: A Half-Century of Research on Transition Metal Complexes. Selected Papers of Fred Basolo.* Basolo., F., Burmeister, J. L. (eds.), World Scientific Publishing: River Edge, NJ, 2003.
2. Basolo, F., 2002. *From Coello to Inorganic Chemistry: A Lifetime of Reactions*, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, New York.