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## IN MEMORIAM-JAY K. KOCHI (1927-2008)

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## IN MEMORIAM-JAY K. KOCHI (1927–2008)

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Although Jay Kochi called himself an organic chemist, his impact on modern inorganic chemistry was exceptional. His clear thinking about chemical reactivity led to numerous publications that bridged both inorganic and organic chemistry. A recent example of this is his *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* 2007 article on “...Outer- and Inner-Sphere Mechanisms for Organic Electron Transfer...,” which builds on the concepts developed by Henry Taube. In my own area of chemical interest, Kochi made many significant contributions to the reaction chemistry of organogold compounds. He seems to have been among the first to develop a detailed understanding of reductive coupling with methylgold complexes.

Kochi's career included academic positions at Harvard, Case Institute of Technology, Indiana University, and the University of Houston, where he was the Robert A. Welch Professor of Chemistry. Born in Los Angeles, Jay and his family suffered the fate of many Japanese-Americans during World War II who were confined to camps restricting their freedom. However, this slowed him very little and he completed his B.S. at UCLA in 1949 and his Ph.D at Iowa State three years later. After a lectureship at Harvard, where he became acquainted with the inorganic chemistry of Geoff Wilkinson and Al Cotton, he accepted a position at Case Institute of Technology in 1962, where I also accepted a position the same year. Jay stayed with Case and Case Western Reserve University through the merger of the two institutions, leaving in 1969 for Indiana University. He and George Olah were two

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strong scientific leaders in the development of the merged chemistry department at CWRU who eventually were elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

As a colleague of Kochi's for seven years, I found him to be a great friend and a resource for information concerning radical reactions, a resource to be valued. We were studying questions of metal promoted sulfur atom transfer, questions related to metal catalyzed sulfur vulcanization of rubber, and Jay's questions about radical versus ionic character of reactions were often disconcerting and not readily answered. Later, when he had moved to Houston and I to A&M, we discussed oxidative addition to dinuclear gold species and the role, if any, radical processes played in this chemistry. Jay had published the first work on trimethylgold(III)phosphine rearrangements and thoroughly read our papers on trimethylgold ylides. In order to develop his own X-ray crystallography program at Houston, he hired one of the people who had done post-doctoral studies with me, the late Leigh Porter. His book *Metal Catalyzed Oxidation of Organic Compounds* with R. A. Sheldon (Academic Press, 1981) is highly cited but his book on *Organometallic Mechanisms and Catalysis* (Academic Press, 1978) is a classic in the field of metal based radical reaction chemistry. It is "must" reading for persons involved with metal catalyzed alkyl coupling reactions.

Both the inorganic and organic chemical communities will miss his sharp mind and critical thinking.