

Preface

A tribute to Yannik Hoppilliard

Yannik started her research career in the mid-sixties as an organic chemist, as did many mass spectrometrists of her generation. Organic mass spectrometry was growing as a way to analyze newly synthesized molecules, and in return the ability to synthesize labeled molecules opened the way to the detailed study of organic reaction mechanisms in the gas phase. The Audier group (then in Orsay) specialized in this field, and Yannik took an active part in these studies, which in the 1980s started to focus on distonic ions and the intermediacy of ion–molecule complexes. One of the directions she took at that time was to couple quantum chemical calculations to mass spectrometric experiments, long before it became easy to run and well accepted as it is today.

In 1987, she started working with a Plasma Desorption mass spectrometer, an apparatus which was exclusively in the hands of physicists at the time. Ron Macfarlane recalls in this issue how much Yannik grilled physicists on the mechanisms of desorption-ionization, trying to use the potential of the method for chemical, and then biochemical applications (grilling colleagues, and anybody around for that matter, is another one of the things she excels at). Although she is no longer running PDMS, this technique sparked her interest in MALDI and she continues to question the physical mechanisms involved in desorption-ionization and electrospray processes from a chemist's point of view. Her seminal

work on the interaction of alkali metal cations with glycine, published in 1992 and 1993, was way ahead of the general interest in the field which developed in the late nineties and is still very strong today. It was a great source of inspiration. She now tackles the development of medical applications of tandem mass spectrometry, in keeping with her original positioning at the frontier between fundamentals and applications.

Yannik was one of the (few) founding members of the Société Française de Spectrométrie de Masse (SFSM) in 1985, when it appeared to her that the developments in this field were so important as to merit a society on its own. She has been a member of the Conseil d'Administration of the SFSM from 1988 to 1991 and 1996 to 1999, and president from 1998 to 1999. No doubt she would have been in charge even more if the statutes of the society had not required frequent rotation. In 1983, she joined the scientific committee of the International Mass Spectrometry Conference, to become the chairwoman of the XIth edition, organized in Bordeaux in 1988. This event had a great impact on the French community.

On the personal side, no one who has met Yannik can fail to be overwhelmed by her *joie de vivre*, her generosity and her unfailing good humor. An evening spent at the dinner table with Yannik is an experience not to be missed and, once had, not to be forgotten!

It is distressing that Yannik's recognition is so far behind the value of her contributions to mass

spectrometry. Her reluctance to put herself forward has greatly impeded the wide-spread recognition of her work. When the need arose for a picture of her to be published in this issue, I figured that the best way would be to take it myself. She managed to grab my camera and inadvertently let it fall on the floor, breaking it, for good! I wonder if this is the sort of reason

why *IJMS* guest editors are changing with each new special issue?

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