

Pascal Le Floch: 1958–2010

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We are sad to report that Pascal Le Floch, one of the commissioning editors of this themed issue of *NJC*, has not lived to see its appearance. Pascal was a highly skilled chemist who brought his formidable intellect to a wide range of subjects, from transition metal chemistry to the elucidation of reactivity through quantum chemical methods. He will almost certainly be considered to have been one of the real pioneers of using calculations and experiments iteratively, in tandem, to generate and rationalise innovative new chemistry.

However, Pascal will also be remembered for some strikingly innovative main group chemistry, particularly with regard to phosphorus. From the very outset of his career in François Mathey's department, he made incisive contributions to phosphinine (phosphabenzene)

chemistry, notably through the development of a synthetically-expedient route to 2-halophosphinines and their elaboration into 2,2'-biphosphinines; elegant and complex calixphosphinines followed. He also developed a simple flash pyrolysis pathway to phosphalkynes (including the parent $\text{HC}\equiv\text{P}$) under neutral conditions, and was involved in the simplification and optimisation of the "phospha-Wittig" method for the direct preparation of $\text{P}=\text{C}$ bonds from aldehydes. Later, directing his own CNRS unit, he showed characteristic imagination in using phosphorus as a non-coordinating but architecturally important component in iminophosphoranes and bis(thiophosphinoyl)carbenes, thus providing a demonstration of how, with creativity, highly evolved and modular chemistry

can be created from such a simple building block as dppm.

In this themed issue, we note our respect and affection for an outstanding teacher, a quite brilliant chemist and a fine Laboratory Director. A fuller and more appropriate tribute to Pascal, who was co-Editor in Chief of *NJC*, will appear in a subsequent issue dedicated to him.

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