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72. Professor Cristofor I. Simionescu on his 70th Birthday

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PROFESSOR CRISTOFOR I. SIMIONESCU ON HIS 70TH BIRTHDAY

Professor Cristofor I. Simionescu was born on July 17, 1920, in Dumbraveni-Suceava. His father was a high school teacher, and young Simionescu went to elementary school in his home town. After completing elementary school he went to Jassy and attended the prestigious "National Lyceum," the roots of which stem from the "Michailean Academy." He then began studies at the Polytechnic Institute of Jassy at the Faculty of Chemical Engineering. As a young student he was known for his enthusiasm and was recognized as an excellent young scientist. In 1944 Cristofor Simionescu graduated *magna cum laude* from the Polytechnic Institute in Jassy. He obtained his first scientific degree in organic technology, i.e., Doctor of Technical Sciences, in 1948, and became Associate Professor at the Polytechnic Institute. In 1951 he was promoted to Full Professor and was appointed to the Chair of Natural and Synthetic Macromolecules. From 1953 until 1976 Professor Simionescu was Rector of the Polytechnic Institute of Jassy.

In 1955 Cristofor Simionescu was elected a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the Socialist Republic of Romania and, in 1963, became a full member. In the same year he was also elected President of the Jassy branch of the Academy of Sciences; he served in this position from 1963 to 1974, and from 1989 to the present. In 1974 Professor Simionescu was elected Vice President of the Academy of Sciences of the Socialist Republic of Romania, a position he still holds.

On Professor Simionescu's initiative, the Institute of Chemistry in Jassy—an Institute of the Academy of Sciences—was transformed in 1964 into an Institute entirely dedicated to research on polymers, i.e., Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry. Professor Simionescu has been its director since 1970. Professor Simionescu is now Director ad honores of the "Petru Poni" Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry in Jassy.

Cristofor Simionescu's personality, his important contributions to the creation of a modern school of macromolecular chemistry in Romania, and his many activities in education and science have been recog-

nized and highly appreciated worldwide. Simionescu is a member of several international scientific organizations including the Societe Chimique de France (1963) and the American Chemical Society (1965). He is an Honorary Member of the Societe de Chimie Industrielle de Paris (1970), a member of the International Academy of Wood Science, President of the European-African Group of this Academy (1979), and a member of the International Society for the Study of the Origin of Life (ISSOL). Professor Simionescu has also been a national representative of Romania to the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), a member of the IUPAC Macromolecular Division, and a member of the IUPAC Committee of Teaching in Chemistry.

Cristofor Simionescu was elected a foreign member of the Academy of Sciences of the former GDR (1982) and of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1986). He is a member of the New York Academy of Sciences and was selected to be a foreign member of the American Chemical Society at its centennial (1976). Professor Simionescu also received an honorary doctoral degree from the Polytechnical School of Sofia, Bulgaria (1986).

Professor Simionescu is the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of Cellulose Chemistry and Technology* (1967) and is the Editor-in-Chief of the *Scientific Memoirs of the Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania* (1977). He is a member of the editorial boards of *Acta Polymerica*, *Revue Roumaine de Chimie*, *Romanian Journal of Chemistry*, and is a member of the advisory boards of *Journal of Polymer Science: Polymer Chemistry Edition* and of the *European Polymer Journal*.

The scientific activities of Professor Simionescu show his broad interest in the natural sciences. His work covers a wide spectrum in macromolecular, organic, and applied chemistry. His work has been published in over 600 scientific papers in Romanian and foreign journals, and he is the holder of more than 40 patents. He also is the author and coauthor of some 20 books.

Under the guidance of Professor Simionescu, more than 75 young scientists from Romania and abroad have completed their Ph.D. studies in the fields of organic and macromolecular chemistry. The subjects covered involve wood chemistry, the chemistry of polysaccharides, the synthesis and polymerization (copolymerization) of new monomers, polymer mechanochemistry, photo- and semiconducting polymers, plasmochemistry, chemistry of multifunctional initiators, electroinitiated polymerizations, and macromolecular charge-transfer complexes (CTC).

Professor Simionescu has always supported new directions in theory and in experimental approaches. His contributions are considered basic for the development of polymers with conjugated double bonds, mainly substituted polyacetylenes. He has also contributed to an understanding of how life could have emerged from the primary gases of the reducing atmosphere on cold, primitive Earth. In this last area, Professor Simionescu coauthored *Cold Theory of the Origin of Life*, and he has published more than 50 papers and one book on this subject.

Since 1964 Professor Simionescu has been involved in the organization of numerous national and international scientific meetings including nine International Symposia on Cellulose Chemistry and Technology (in Romania), the 39th International Congress of Industrial Chemistry (Bucharest, 1970), the First Romanian-U.S. Seminar in Polymer Chemistry (Jassy, 1976), the 29th International Symposium on Macromolecules (IUPAC Macro'83, Bucharest, 1983), and the 17th Meeting of the Problem Commission of Macromolecular Compounds of the Academies of Socialist Countries (Jassy, 1985). The biography of Professor Simionescu has been included in the *Who's Who in the World*, 5th ed., 1980/1981.

As an educator, colleague, and scientist, Cristofor Simionescu is an example of perseverance and tenacity. He created and maintains a stimulating atmosphere at the Polytechnic Institute and at the Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry "Petru Poni." Many young scientists who are now engaged in research and teaching in numerous institutes and universities in Romania and abroad have profited from his inspiration. His devotion to teaching and research, which he has successfully combined throughout his career, has been the most characteristic feature of his multifaceted activities.

Professor Simionescu is Scientist Emeritus (1969) and Professor Emeritus (1973). In recognition of his merits in both scientific and social activities, he has been awarded more than 15 national medals and awards.

The public responsibilities of Professor Simionescu have included such high functions as member of the Great National Assembly and member of the State Council of the S.R. Romania. He was also Vice President of the National Council for Science and Technology.

Professor Simionescu has been active in creating conditions in Romania for international scientific collaboration among scientists. In recognition of his efforts, he received the Centennial Medal of the American Chemical Society, the Jubilee Medal V. I. Lenin from the Supreme So-

viet of the USSR (1971), the Diploma de Reconocimiento of the Academy of the Republic of Cuba, and the Diploma of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

On the occasion of his 70th birthday, his students, colleagues, and friends wish Professor Cristofor I. Simionescu a long and happy life, with continued good health.

Ioan I. Negulescu
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