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## 73. Professor Cristofor I. Simionescu on his 70th Birthday

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Professor  
CRISTOFOR I. SIMIONESCU  
on his 70th Birth Anniversary



Professor Cristofor I. Simionescu is 70 years old; he was born on July 17, 1920 in Dumbrăveni-Suceava. Both his father and his mother were school teachers. Young Simionescu went to elementary school in his home town and, after finishing, he came to Jassy and attended the prestigious "National Lyceum", the roots of which are in the "Michailean Academy". He then started his studies in the Polytechnic Institute of Jassy at the Faculty of Chemical Engineering. As a young student, he was known for his enthusiasm in his work and he was soon recognized as an outstanding young scientist. As a consequence, in 1944, Cristofor Simionescu graduated *magna cum laude* from the Polytechnic Institute in Jassy. In 1948, he obtained his first scientific degree in the field of organic technology, i.e. Doctor of Technical Sciences, became Associate Professor, and, in 1951, was promoted to Full Professor and 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, he was elected corresponding member of the Romanian Academy and in 1963 he was elected full member. In the same year, he was also elected President of the Jassy Branch of the Academy; he served in this position from 1963 to 1974, and, again, from 1989 on.

In 1974, Professor Simionescu was elected Vice-President of the Romanian Academy, a position held until 1990.

Following Professor Simionescu's initiative, the Institute of Chemistry in Jassy — an academic Institute, was transformed in 1964 into an Institute entirely dedicated to the research on polymers, i.e. the "P. Poni" 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 contribution to the creation of a modern school of macromolecular chemistry in Romania, and his many-sided activities in education and science have been widely recognized and highly appreciated worldwide. Simionescu is a member of several international scientific organizations including Société Chimique de France (1963) and the American Chemical Society (1965). He is Honorary Member of Société de Chimie Industrielle de Paris (1970), a member of the International Academy of Wood Science, President of the European-African Group of this Academy (since 1979) and of the International Society for the Study of the Origin of Life (ISSOL). Professor Simionescu was also a national representative of IUPAC (International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry) and a member of the IUPAC Macromolecular Division and of the IUPAC Committee for Teaching Chemistry.

Cristofor Simionescu was elected foreign member of the Academy of Sciences of DDR (1982) and of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1986); he is an active member of the N.Y. Academy of Sciences and was selected foreign member of the American Chemical Society at its Centennial (1976).

In 1986, Professor Simionescu became *Doctor honoris causa* of the Polytechnical School of Sofia, Bulgaria.

Professor Simionescu is the founder and editor-in-chief of the international journal *Cellulose Chemistry and Technology* (since 1967) and editor-in-chief of the *Scientific Memoirs of the Academy of Romania* (since 1977), member of the editorial boards of *Revue Roumaine de Chimie* and other Romanian chemistry journals, and member of the advisory boards of *Acta Polymerica*, of *Journal of Polymer Science: Polymer Chemistry Edition* and *European Polymer Journal*.

The scientific activity of Professor Simionescu shows his interest in the entire range of 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 of some twenty books.

Under the guidance of Professor Simionescu, more than 90 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, synthesis and polymerization (copolymerization) of new monomers, polymer mechanochemistry, photo- and semiconducting polymers, plasmochemistry, chemistry of multifunctional initiators, electroinitiated polymerizations, macromolecular charge-transfer complexes (CTC), etc. Professor Simionescu has always supported new directions in theory and in experimental approaches. His contributions are considered as basic for the develop-



ment of polymers with conjugated double bonds, mainly polyacetylenes. His contributions to the understanding of how life could have emerged from the primary gases of the reduced atmosphere on the cold Earth is also considered far-reaching. In this last area, Professor Simionescu was the coauthor to the Cold Theory of the origin of Life, and published more than 50 papers and one book (translated in Russian, too) on this subject.

Since 1964, Professor Simionescu was involved in the organization of numerous national and international scientific meetings, including nine International Symposia on Cellulose Chemistry and Technology, 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 East European Countries (Jassy, 1985).

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

Professor Simionescu is *scientist emeritus* (1969) and *professor emeritus* (1973). In recognition of his merits in both scientific and social activities, he was awarded more than 15 national medals and awards.

Professor Simionescu has been very active in creating conditions for international scientific collaboration among scientists and researchers. In recognition of his efforts he received the Centennial Medal of the American Chemical Society, the jubilee medal from the Supreme Soviet 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.

The biography of Professor Simionescu has been included in WHO'S WHO IN THE WORLD, 5th edition, 1980/1981.

On the occasion of this 70th birthday, all colleagues, pupils, and friends — from all over the world — wish Professor *Cristofor I. Simionescu* a long and fruitful life, with continued good health and spiritual vigor.

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