IN MEMORIAM

PROFESSOR IOAN SILAGHI-DUMITRESCU, PhD

corresponding member of Romanian Academy

(June 1, 1950 – December 25, 2009)

Professor Ioan SILAGHI-DUMITRESCU was born in Botiz (Satu-Mare county) on June 1st 1950. He attended primary school in Botiz and high school in the city of Satu-Mare. He went on to receive a B. Sc. degree in Inorganic Chemistry in 1974 from the Faculty of Chemistry of the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca. Between 1974 and 1977 he worked at the Intreprinderea de Ceramica Fina pentru Constructii Sanex in Cluj-Napoca, and in 1977 he joined the ranks of the Inorganic Chemistry Chair at the Faculty of Chemistry of the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, where he also obtained a PhD degree in Chemistry in 1981. He was promoted full professor in 1994. It was in this position that he provided essential contributions to the modernization and reformation of the Faculty’s curricula, including the transition to the Bologna system and promoting new disciplines of study and new lines of study – the most recent of which was the international Master’s program in molecular modeling initiated in 2008. He was head of the Inorganic Chemistry Chair (1994-2007) and then also Dean of the faculty from 2008 to his premature departure in December 25th, 2009.
Professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu’s contributions were in the area of inorganic and organometallic chemistry with transition metals and group 13-15 compounds, including cumulenic and heterocumulenic systems with heavy elements, compounds with catalytic activity, compounds with biological activity. He was among the first researchers in the country to approach chemistry with computing techniques (computational chemistry), starting with studies on the coordination behavior of organothiophosphoric ligands and evolving towards quantum chemistry. The results obtained on the structure of posttransitional-element clusters, organometallic clusters, cumulenic and heterocumulenic systems, nanotubes and calixarenes, were reported in in almost 200 articles and are found in journals among the most prestigious across the globe. The majority of his research involved establishing strategies for chemical synthesis, rationalization and prediction of properties for a wide range of inorganic, organometallic, and organic compounds, which were obtained experimentally in his own group as well as in the groups of collaborators from within Romania and from abroad.

The Center for molecular modeling and computational quantum chemistry set up by professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu in 2007 (developed from the Laboratory for structure and molecular modeling he had set up in 1996) offers an infrastructure which is internationally competitive and has allowed for the consolidation of the theoretical chemistry school in Cluj, including collaborations with high-level researchers from the USA and China.

Professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu was a “visiting professor” at Universidad Nacional Autonoma (UNAM) in Mexico (1995-1996), University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia (SUA) (1-2 months per year, 2000-2008), and visiting researcher at University of Nottingham (1992), Heidelberg University (1993-1994). His collaborations spanned Universities in Toulouse, Rouen, Lille, Leipzig, Braunschweig, Köln, Budapest, Pecs, Beijing, Guanjou, Moskow (Idaho).

In the framework of the activity of Professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu one can mention his cooperation with the «Working Group for Metal Research in Biological Systems» from Timisoara, contributing, as co-editor, to the publication of the last two tomes (Tome VIII, 2008 ; Tome IX, 2009) of the Symposia Series “Metal Elements in Environment, Medicine and Biology”.

Professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu received the "Gheorghe Spacu" prize from the Romanian Academy in 1989 and the “Diploma de Onoare and G. Spacu Medal” from the Romanian Chemical Society in 2009. On March 24th 2006 he was elected corresponding member of the Romanian Academy.

Passing into eternity of Professor Ioan Silaghi-Dumitrescu, PhD – corresponding member of Romanian Academy, a well known personality at national and international level for his contribution to the development of chemistry is a great loss for the Romanian chemical sciences.

*Editorial Board*