

*Obituary Em. Prof. Dr. Pierre Cornelis*

Dear colleagues,

I have the sad duty to inform you that our colleague Em. Professor Dr. Pierre Cornelis passed away on Saturday, December 2, 2023.

Pierre was born on November 4, 1949, and after his PhD work at the Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve, he stayed for two years at the famous Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israël. He joined our university in 1988, originally as a member of the laboratory "Algemene Biologie" of late Professor Raymond Hamers. From 1993 on till 1996, Prof. Cornelis was the coordinator of the post graduate programme "Tropical Molecular Biology". From 1998 on, he became head of the research unit "Microbial Interactions" (MINT), which transitioned later on into the research group "Microbiology" (MICR). His lab was also member of the VIB (Flemish Institute of Biotechnology).



Prof. Cornelis was very active as a researcher and gained a world reputation in the field of *Pseudomonas* and its siderophores. He was a passionate lecturer and acted as professor of Microbiology, Medical Microbiology, Advanced and Applied Molecular Biology, Advanced Microbial Genetics in the postgraduate programmes "Graduate School in Molecular Biology and Biotechnology", the "Interuniversity programme Molecular Biology (IPMB)" and the Master of Science in Bio-Engineering Sciences programme. He was promoter of numerous master and PhD theses and was also Director of the "Natural Sciences and Engineering" Doctoral School at VUB.

For many years, he acted as member of the editorial board of several international peer-reviewed journals including *Microbiology*, *Environmental Microbiology*, *PlosOne*, and as editor in Chief of the Open Access journal *MicrobiologyOpen*. As member of the Board of Directors of the Belgian Society for Microbiology, he also received an Honorary membership of the Society. Even after his retirement at VUB in 2014, he remained scientifically active while affiliated with the University of Rouen in France. We are forever grateful for his contributions to the microbiology community, at VUB, in Belgium and beyond.

Except from being a renowned scientist, teacher and mentor, Pierre was highly appreciated and respected by his students and colleagues for his kindness, friendship and warm personality: he was a real gentleman.

We will all miss Pierre, but let it be a comfort that we were privileged to have known him. We will keep his memory deep in our heart.

It was Pierre's will that his body should be donated to science.

Em. Professor Dr. Eddy Van Driessche