

of the Physical (and Biophysical) Chemistry Division (I) Committee (2000–2001). Following his service in Division I, he was elected on the IUPAC Bureau (1998–2003); in 1998, he chaired the Ad Hoc Committee on Project Evaluation Criteria, and continued as member on the then newly created Project Committee, which he ended up by chairing from 2004 to 2007.

Somsen won numerous awards and in 1995 he was designated an Officer in the Order of Orange Nassau from Her Majesty, the Queen of the Netherlands. He completed his IUPAC tenure in 2007 and was presented his service award by IUPAC President Bryan Henry during the opening ceremony of the General Assembly in Torino.

*Wij zijn verdrietig maar dankbaar voor alles wat hij voor IUPAC en anderen betekend heeft.*

He is survived by his wife, Elly, four children, several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

## Aubrey Dennis Jenkins

6 September 1927–25 April 2021

A tribute by Dick Jones and Claudio dos Santos

Former friends and colleagues were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Emeritus Professor Aubrey Jenkins on 25 April 2021. Aubrey grew to be a distinguished figure within the IUPAC Polymer Division after joining its forerunner, the Macromolecular Division, as a member in 1975. His distinction was equally recognised within both industry and academia by the international polymer community.

Born in London in 1927, he attended Dartford Grammar School from where he matriculated to the University of London in 1943. However, this being at the height of WWII, he needed to take a job, but undeterred he also enrolled as a part-time student at the University's Sir John Cass Technical Institute from where he progressed to King's College, graduating B.Sc. in Special Chemistry with 1st Class Honours in 1948. Awarded the University of London Studentship in Chemistry for 1948, by 1950 he had gained his PhD.

From 1950 to 1964, Aubrey was an industrial chemist, firstly with Courtaulds Ltd. at its Fundamental Research Laboratory at Maidenhead in Berkshire and thereafter with Gillette Industries Ltd at Reading. At Courtaulds he was under the direction of C.H. Bamford. For a year, 'Bam' had him investigate the dimerization of methyl ketene before urging a move into the polymer field as it was clear that this was where the company's future would lie if it was to compete with other chemical giants such as DuPont. His first task was to determine the kinetics of the polymerization of acrylonitrile, the

monomer that was predicted to constitute 95 % of a future marketable product. Polyacrylonitrile, however, is one of a very few vinyl addition polymers that are insoluble in their own monomer and this work led to what Aubrey told me whilst holidaying together in the south of France in 2011, that he considered to be the most scientifically significant discovery of his career, kinetic evidence of 'trapped' radicals, the existence of which were later to be indisputably proven by EPR.

Between 1956 and '62, the team of Bamford, Jenkins and Johnston also published about ten papers on the reaction between polymer radicals and transition metal salts and determinations of rates of initiation in vinyl polymerization based on the same chemistry. It is worth pausing to reflect that were it not for a temperature difference of about 80 °C, atom transfer radical polymerization might have hit the billboards many years earlier.

In 1960, the parting of the ways of Bamford and Jenkins was inevitable when Aubrey accepted a long-standing offer to become Head of Chemistry at Gillette Industries. This was a managerial role and although while at Courtaulds he had already travelled widely in Europe, particularly Eastern Europe during the communist era, and in 1959 had accepted an invitation to lecture at a Gordon Conference (his first visit to the USA), he now had to make many transatlantic trips. Typically, these were 'Gillette-focussed' visits to Boston, Chicago and ultimately Washington DC where he was eventually to be seconded for a year. While he was able to recruit excellent scientists of his own choosing he missed the days of open scientific discussion. Secrecy attached to all his team's research but at least it led him into legal work which was to become a source of enjoyment throughout his later career.

To Aubrey, Washington was the most beautiful city in the US and there is no doubting that Gillette hoped that he would resettle there. However, from Colin Eaborn (later Sir Colin) he received an offer he had no wish to refuse: to join the staff of the new University of Sussex as a Senior Lecturer in Chemistry. He took up his new post in 1964 and remained at Sussex throughout the rest of his career, ascending to Reader (1968), Professor of Polymer Science (1971) and serving as Dean of the School of Molecular Science from 1973–78 before eventually retiring in 1992.

At Sussex, again he built a thriving research team and thereby consolidated his already notable international research reputation. Free radical polymerization mechanisms remained a lifelong dominating interest and even after retirement, he picked up on what he and Bam had started, the "Patterns of Reactivity



Aubrey Jenkins

Scheme" for the modelling of radical copolymerization reactions, a development of the Q - e scheme of Alfrey and Price, first presented to the world at the 1959 Gordon Conference. This was the venue that first opened the door to his getting to know a wealth of eminent international polymer scientists and resulted in his receiving many invitations to lecture, each feeding a growing list of lifelong friendships.

In 1975, Aubrey joined the Macromolecular Division of IUPAC (later the Polymer Division) of which he remained an active member until declining health led to his retirement in the early 2010s. From 1977 to 1985 he chaired the Commission on Macromolecular Nomenclature, refusing to refer to it under any other name even after it became the Subcommittee on Polymer Terminology following the millennial structural reorganization of the Union. He was also secretary for the Division from 1985 to 1993. Over the years, his name has featured as co-author or lead author of many of our publications, two of which have notably received over 500 citations.

IUPAC enabled him to travel even more widely but amongst all the countries and continents that he visited during his lifetime; his favourites were Eastern Europe, New Zealand and South America. He could relate tales of adventure and friendship from everywhere he went and it is worthy of note that his last research student, Claudio Gouvea dos Santos from Brazil, is also a present day member of the Subcommittee on Polymer Terminology, and I take pleasure in asking him to write, in a more personal vein, a short finale to this tribute to Aubrey's life and career. However, I cannot end my own contribution without mentioning Aubrey's love of

classical music in all its expressions, a love that I share. He frequently attended concerts or operatic/ballet productions wherever he roamed, but particularly in London and Glyndebourne, the world famous opera house just a short distance from his home. There is much of my friendship with Aubrey that I shall personally miss.

Aubrey is survived by his wife Jitka and two sons from his first marriage, nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

*–Richard (Dick) Jones*

Through correspondence, Aubrey had accepted me to study for a PhD under his supervision so, armed with a Brazilian government grant, I arrived at the University of Sussex in 1988. I did not meet him immediately upon my arrival because he had just remarried and was still enjoying a round-the-world honeymoon trip. Two weeks later we met for the first time and I was soon to realize I was in front of a colossal scientist.

Despite his outstanding scientific reputation, Aubrey was to me a very approachable person. During my time at Sussex, apart from delving into the controversies of the various mechanisms proposed for the then newly discovered group transfer polymerisation, about which Aubrey was very passionate, we built a strong relationship and gradually the supervisor turned into a friend. He was a kind and generous man and I was to benefit from his deep knowledge of polymer chemistry, his friendship and wider acquaintance.

Perhaps by my being Brazilian or because he knew I was going to be his last graduate student, I felt a certain affection flowing from him. As Dick has written above, South America was one of his favourite places and, before we met, he had already been to Brazil several times as some kind of "ambassador" for the British



*Claudio with Jitka and Aubrey in Rio de Janeiro in 1996*

Council. Aubrey loved Brazil and the Brazilian culture. I remember that, at one of the dinners at his home, with great pride and sense of achievement, he surprised me with a glass of *caipirinha* he had prepared himself.

Four years after my return to Brazil at the end of 1992, I was delighted to meet up with Aubrey and Jitka again when they stopped for a few days in Rio on their way to Argentina. I live about 200 miles away and Rio is not a place I go to very often. However, Aubrey knew it like the palm of his hand and gave me several touristic tips that included, not only the best places to visit but also the names and numbers of the buses to take you there! The photo above was taken at the Botanical Garden, one of the not-to-miss spots suggested by Aubrey.

In 2000, I spent a few sabbatical months in UK and had the chance to visit Aubrey and Jitka. Jitka served “duck à l’orange” for dinner; even now I can savour the taste when I close my eyes. After that, our contact

was mostly by email and through Dick keeping me posted with news about them. In 2006, Dick invited me as an observer to attend the IUPAC Polymer Division Meetings held in conjunction with the IUPAC World Polymer Congress in Rio de Janeiro, and since then I have been a member of the Subcommittee on Polymer Terminology. I was very happy to meet Aubrey in Torino during the IUPAC General Assembly in the following year but it was then that I knew I wouldn’t have the chance to welcome them to Brazil again when he told me that his health prevented him from taking long haul flights. However, in Glasgow, during the 2009 General Assembly, I had the pleasure of meeting him for one last time in person.

Aubrey led me along the most important path of my scientific career. I feel privileged to have had him as my supervisor.

–*Claudio Gouvea dos Santos*



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