

**A TRIBUTE TO PROF. DR. FARUK JOSÉ NOME AGUILERA ON HIS 60th
BIRTHDAY**

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ABSTRACT

Prof. Faruk José Nome Aguilera was born in Linares, Chile on May 29, 1947. He graduated in biochemistry from the University of Chile in 1971, obtained the Ph.D. Degree in Chemistry from Texas A& M University in 1976 and has been a faculty member at the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, Brazil since 1977. His main research interests deal with catalysis and mechanisms of organic reactions in solution. He has trained approximately eighty research scientists including more than forty master and twenty doctoral students and has published about three hundred scientific articles. Prof. Faruk is a member of the Brazilian Academy of Science.

KEY WORDS : History of chemistry. Organic Reactions Mechanism, Science in Brazil

RESUMO

Prof. Faruk José Nome Aguilera nasceu em Linares, Chile em 29 de Maio de 1947. Ele se formou em bioquímica na Universidad de Chile e obteve o grau de Ph.D. em Química da Texas A&M University em 1976 e faz parte do corpo docente da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina em Florianópolis, Brasil desde 1977. Suas atividades principais de pesquisa tratam de catálise e mecanismos de reações orgânicas em solução. Ele preparou mais de oitenta pesquisadores, incluindo mais de quarenta alunos de mestrado e vinte de doutorado e publicou aproximadamente trezentos trabalhos científicos. O Prof. Faruk é membro da Academia Brasileira de Ciências.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: História da Química, Mecanismo de reações orgânicas, Ciência no Brasil.

Faruk José Nome Aguilera was born in Linares, Chile on May 30, 1947. He was the youngest of eleven siblings, six boys and five girls.

His father, José María Nome Gonzalez, originally from Damascus, Syria, settled in Chile at the beginning of the last century (1910) and with time became a very successful merchant.

His mother, Mercedes Aguilera, a true matriarch, was a member of a well to do Chilean family from the Maule Region.

Prof. Faruk attended primary and secondary school in Linares and as a child and as the youngest brother received a lot of special attention from all his family.

Linares is a very pleasant city located in the Maule Region in the center of the country, on the fertile central plain, about 300 km south of Santiago and 50 km south of Talca. The Cordillera of the Andes is not far away to the east. It was founded by Ambrosio O'Higgins, Viceroy of Peru in 1794. At the present, it has a population of about 80,000 people and it is an active agricultural, industrial, commercial and service center. It is the home of the Artillery School of the Chilean Army. One of its main attractions is the Cathedral Church of San Ambrosio de Linares and its square. It was inspired by the Basilica of Santo Ambrosio, Milano, Italy, and among the monuments of the central square there are some lions that in the more distant past adorned the main square of Lima, Peru.

The city counts among its natives important statesmen, politicians, poets, writers, musicians, scientists and intellectuals. We mention in passing, Abate Molina (Juan Ignacio Molina), priest, naturalist and father of Chilean science; Pablo Neruda, famous poet and Noble Prize winner and two former presidents of the country, Carlos Ibañez del Campo and Arturo Alessandri Palma.

Prof. Faruk began studies at the University of Chile, Santiago at the age of sixteen and graduated in biochemistry in 1971. He continued his studies at the graduate level at Texas A&M University and obtained the Ph.D. Degree in Chemistry in 1976. His research advisor was Prof. Janos H. Fendler.

In 1977 Prof. Faruk Nome joined the faculty of Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), in Florianópolis, Brazil, where he is still active at the present time and holds the position of Full Professor of Chemistry.

During his 30-year tenure as Professor at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), Dr. Faruk Nome participated of a wide number of committees and councils at the departmental, university, state and national levels. Among them we cite the Graduate Committee in Chemistry, Superior Council of Science and Technology of the State of Santa Catarina (FUNCITEC), Brazilian National Research Council (CNPq) and the Brazilian Commission for Improvement of Higher Education (CAPES).



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Prof. Faruk's main research interests deal with catalysis and mechanisms of organic reactions in solution. One aspect of his work involves the development of catalysts for the hydrolysis of phosphate and sulfate esters, as well as nucleic acids, amides and other esters of biological interest. Another aspect deals with the effect of colloidal aggregates and artificial enzymes on organic reactions in solution. In particular, he is interested in the effect of dendrimers, functional polymers and anionic, cationic, neutral and zwitterionic micelles on organic reactions with special emphasis on reaction rates, reactivity, equilibrium and incorporation of substrates.

We (LGI) first met Prof. Faruk Nome Aguilera in July of 1978, soon after our arrival in Florianópolis, where we went mainly with the purpose to help establish the Master Degree Program in Physical Chemistry. Soon afterwards we collaborated doing research work on micellar catalysis, decomposition of pesticides and micelle formation.

At the time, Prof. Faruk was a young and enthusiastic scientist, full of energy, dreams and expectations.

He had the option to return to his native Chile, set up a chemical laboratory in Linares, where his brothers reserved a whole floor of a tall building in the center of the town, be close to his family or accept a position as a faculty member at the University of Chile. He decided to stay in Florianópolis and be a pioneer in science in Santa Catarina.

The graduate program was not actually in Physical Chemistry. It consisted really of two programs under the same roof, one in Chemistry, the other in Physics. The Physics Department in Florianópolis, that was better established at the time, had all its plans for beginning a graduate program undermined by physicists at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) in Porto Alegre, who felt more comfortable without any competition in Southern Brazil.

During the initial stages of the program we mention the substantial and fundamental effort and contribution of Profs. John Dale Gault (USA), Ted Ray Taylor (USA), Subramania Jayaraman (India) and Joel Louis Rene Muzart (France) in Physics and Prof. Faruk (Chile), Juan Jacob Eduardo Humeres Allende (Chile) and ourself (LGI-USA) in Chemistry. A few years later we were joined by Prof. Rosendo Augusto Yunes from Argentina. The research activity in physics dealt mainly with liquid crystals and phase transitions and in chemistry with organic reactions, surfactants and micelles.

Among the Brazilians who were students in the beginning and later made significant contributions, we cite Profs. Ademir Neves, Bruno Szpoganicz, Eduardo Stadler and Eduardo Pinheiro in Chemistry and Luiz Taylor Silveira Siedler, Abio Valeriano de Andrade Pinto and Antônio Rogério de Souza in Physics. Worthy of special note are the efforts and contributions of Graça Hoeller, secretary of the Graduate Program from the beginning to the present and Jadir Caminatti who has been helping with administrative tasks since 1981.

The Graduate Program in Physical Chemistry terminated officially in 1991 with the simultaneous establishment of two separate Doctoral Programs, one in Chemistry and the other one in Physics. At the present, both of them are considered of excellent quality and are widely respected throughout Brazil. A total of one hundred ninety nine (199) master theses were approved during the duration of the Graduate Program in Physical Chemistry, more or less evenly divided between chemistry and physics

The new program in chemistry led to the graduation of two hundred and fifty eight (258) master students and one hundred and ninety three (193) doctoral students from 1990 to the present date.

In retrospect, it is relatively easy to see what Prof. Dr. Faruk José Nome Aguilera accomplished in thirty years of effort and hard work in Florianópolis, Brazil. We may only conjecture what might have happened if he had returned to his native Chile. Prof. Faruk Nome might have been a very successful businessman , owner of a chain of chemical laboratories scattered throughout Chile, widely respected scientist and educator or Minister of Education, Science

and Technology. He could have spent hundreds of weekends resting and reflecting at Pesce Rey, a mountain resort in the Andes, property of his family.

We salute Prof. Dr. Faruk José Nome Aguilera on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday, pay our modest tribute to him as a scientist, colleague and friend and congratulate him for his effort and accomplishments during the last thirty years and convey him the best wishes of good health, happiness and success for the days to come.

SOME REPRESENTATIVE PUBLICATIONS

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