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**A TRIBUTE TO PROF. DR. OMAR ABOU EL SEOUD
ON HIS 70th BIRTHDAY**

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ABSTRACT

Prof. Dr. Omar Abou El Seoud was born in Cairo, Egypt on May 21, 1945. He obtained the B.S. and M.S. Degrees in Chemistry from Ain Shams University, Cairo in 1964 and in 1966, respectively, and was awarded the Doctor of Chemistry Degree by the University of São Paulo, Brazil in 1972. He has occupied various faculty positions at the University of São Paulo and at the present is Full Professor of Organic Chemistry. His research interests deal with green chemistry, modified biopolymers, synthesis and applications of surfactants and education in chemistry. He has trained a large number of research scientists including many master and doctoral students and is the author of approximately four hundred scientific works. Prof. Omar Abou El Seoud is the recipient of many scientific prizes and awards including the Presidential Medal of Scientific Merit and is a member of the Brazilian Academy of Science.

KEY WORDS: History of Chemistry, Science in Brazil, Surfactants, Homogeneous Catalysis.

RESUMO

Prof. Dr. Omar Abou El Seoud nasceu no Cairo, Egito em 21 de Maio de 1945. Ele obteve os títulos de Bacharel e Mestre em Química na Universidade Ain Shams, Cairo em 1964 e 1966, respectivamente, e o título de Doutor em Química na Universidade de São Paulo, Brasil em 1972. Ocupou vários cargos na Universidade de São Paulo e na presente data é Professor Titular de Química Orgânica. As suas atividades de pesquisa incluem química verde, biopolímeros modificados, síntese e aplicações de surfatantes e educação em química. Ele preparou muitos pesquisadores, orientou muitos alunos de mestrado e doutorado e publicou aproximadamente quatrocentos trabalhos científicos. Prof. Dr. Omar Abou El Seoud foi honrado com muitos prêmios e distinções, incluindo Comendador da Ordem Nacional de Mérito Científico e também é membro da Academia Brasileira de Ciências.

PALAVRAS CHAVE: História da Química, Ciência no Brasil, Surfatantes, Catálise Homogênea.

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On May 21, 2015 Professor Dr. Omar Abou El Seoud will celebrate his 70th birthday and more than fifty years of contributions to chemistry and to science.

Prof. Omar Abou El Seoud was born in Cairo, Egypt in 1945 . He attended primary and secondary schools in Egypt and obtained the Bachelor of Science Degree in Industrial Chemistry from Ain Shams University, Cairo in 1964.

He was awarded the Master of Science Degree in Organic Chemistry by the same university in 1966 and his thesis advisor was Prof. Bahram H. Mahamoud.

In 1969 Prof. Omar A. El Seoud came to Brazil and continued his graduate studies at the University of São Paulo. He was awarded the Doctor of Chemistry in Organic Chemistry in 1972. His doctoral dissertation dealt with the mechanism of the addition of electrophilic reagents to esters of gama-delta insaturated acids and was done under the supervision of Prof. Luciano do Amaral.

From 1972 to 1974 he did postdoctoral research with Prof. Janos J. Fendler at Texas A & M University , College Station, USA in the area of surfactants, micelles and catalysis.

Prof. Dr. Omar Abou El Seoud began his academic career at the University of São Paulo in 1974, climbed through all the academic steps, obtained the *Livre-Docência* (Title of Privat Dozent) in 1978 and was named Full Professor of Organic Chemistry in 1988. At the present he continues very vigorously his research and teaching activities at the Instituto de Química of the University of São Paulo.

Throughout the years, Prof. Dr. Omar Abou El Seoud participated of many committees and held many administrative positions at the University of São Paulo. We shall cite among them the following: Acting Chairman of the Departamento de Química Fundamental, Chairman of the Graduate Program,

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Chairman of the Research Committee, Member the Chemistry Institute

Ruling Assembly (*Congregação*) and the University Council (*Conselho Universitário*).

He has been Visiting Professor at the Science University of Tokyo, Japan, University of Bayreuth, Germany, Purdue University, USA , University of California, Santa Barbara,USA , National Research Center of Egypt, University of Paris VII, France and the University of York, England.

Prof. Dr. Omar Abou El Seoud is fluent in Arab, Portuguese, German, English, Spanish and French.

Professor O.A. El Seoud's main research interests deal with homogeneous catalysis; chemistry of surfactants including their applications in solubilization, emulsification, and catalysis of organic and inorganic reactions; modified natural polymers, especially cellulose and chitin; synthetic polymers; soil decontamination with surfactants; green chemistry – synthesis and properties of ionic liquids and their mixture with molecular solvents and application as solvents for chemical reactions and in the derivatization of biopolymers; and education in chemistry, considering particularly sustainable development.

He has trained a large number of research scientists, including many master and doctoral students and is the author of approximately 400 (four hundred) scientific works. A list of representative publications is given at the end of the present article.

**For a more complete and detailed list we suggest
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/6098493050474490>**

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Prof. Dr. Omar Abou El Seoud is a member of the Editorial Board of many scientific periodicals including the *Journal of Colloid and Interface Science*, *Journal of Organic Chemistry*, *Journal of Physical Organic Chemistry*, *Colloid and Polymer Science* and *Química Nova*. He was Editor of the *Anais da Associação Brasileira de Química* for many years.

He received many prizes and distinctions. In 1985, we cite the Fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation when he spent a period at the University of Bayreuth, Germany collaborating with Professor Heinz Hoffmann. In 1988 he was elected full member of the Academy of Sciences of the State of São Paulo and in 1992 of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences. He served as President of the São Paulo Section of the Associação Brasileira de Química (ABQ) and was Brazilian National Representative at the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) for Physical Organic Chemistry.

In 2007 Prof. Dr. Omar Abou El Seoud was awarded the title of *Comendador da Ordem Nacional do Mérito Científico do Ministério de Ciência e Tecnologia* (Presidential Medal of Scientific Merit of Brazil).

We (LGI) first met Prof. Omar Abou El Seoud in 1978, soon after our arrival in Brazil. We remember him as a young and very enthusiastic member of the faculty of the University of São Paulo. In the decades that followed our pathways crossed many times. We used to meet often at the yearly congresses of the *Associação Brasileira de Química*, at the regular and tedious meeting of the *Programa Nacional de Cátalise (PRONAC)*- Brazilian National Catalysis Program in Rio de Janeiro, Doctoral Dissertation Committees, especially at the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Florianópolis and at scientific gatherings abroad.

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In the beginning of 1990, Prof. Omar El Seoud was very fortunate to able to collaborate with Prof. Norbert Muller of Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana, USA. Professor Muller was at the time one of the prominent specialists in NMR. His principal research interests were the use of NMR spectroscopy to study intermolecular interaction phenomena in aqueous and nonaqueous solutions, including surfactant aggregation processes. Incredible, as it may seem, it was much more convenient for Prof. Omar to travel thousands of kilometers to the Northern Hemisphere than have access to the NMR equipment available in São Paulo.

During the 8th *International Symposium on Surfactants in Solution* held at Center of Surface Science and Engineering of the University of Florida in June of 1990, Prof. Dr. Omar El Seoud had made arrangements to meet and share accommodations with Professor J.B.F.N. Engberts of the University of Groningen, Netherlands and discuss matters of interest. For some reason, Prof. Engberts could not go Gainsville and sent one of his graduate students to present the paper. The student, who ended up sharing accommodations with Prof. Omar was a novice at scientific meetings. He rehearsed his oral presentation all night, did not let Prof. Omar sleep and also managed to get very good training. Seldom in the history of chemistry was an oral presentation so well prepared, highly valued and understood.

We salute Prof. Dr. Omar El Seoud on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, pay our modest tribute to him as a scientist and colleague, congratulate him for his effort and accomplishments during the last half a century and convey him the best wishes of good health, happiness and success for the days to come.

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