

In memoriam

Jan Alexander Herman (1924-2023)

It is with great sadness that we learned the death of Mr. Jan Alexander Herman on July 21, 2023 at the age of 99. Affectionately known as "Monsieur Herman", he was a professor in the Department of Chemistry at Université Laval from 1957 to 1994.

Jan Alexander Herman was born on October 4, 1923 in Warsaw, Poland. After the outbreak of war in 1939, he was introduced to metallurgy by the German army to support the German industry. After taking part in the Warsaw Uprising on August 1, 1944, Jan Herman was taken prisoner and transferred to the Stalag Mühlberg camp in Saxony, Germany. At the end of the war, he won a scholarship to study in Belgium and enrolled in chemistry at the Université Catholique de Louvain in 1945. It was there that he met his wife Kazimiera, well known in the Department of Chemistry. After obtaining his Doctorate in Science, specializing in chemistry, he worked for six years in a research institute in Brussels.

In 1957, he joined Université Laval as Professor of Chemistry, initially in the Boulevard de l'Entente building, then in the new science building, the Pavillon Alexandre Vachon. Jan Herman enjoyed an exceptional career in both research and teaching.

His research interests included nuclear chemistry, which was in its heyday at the time. As a specialist in physical chemistry, he studied the properties of atoms and molecules. In a sign of his renown, he became Director of the Centre de recherche sur les atomes et les molécules (CRAM). Together with technicians from the Department of Chemistry and graduate students, he built a number of highly sophisticated instruments for in-depth studies of atoms, work which led to several scientific publications.

On the teaching front, Jan Herman taught numerous courses in Physical Chemistry and, for many years, the Quantum Chemistry course, one of the most memorable of the undergraduate chemistry courses. He was extremely appreciated by the students. Mr. Herman and his wife also made an exceptional philanthropic gesture. They made a donation to the Fondation de l'Université Laval that will enable many people to pursue higher education at the University. After his retirement in 1994, Mr. Herman continued to visit the Department of Chemistry frequently. He was greatly appreciated by all. Erudite, jovial, friendly and human, he left no one indifferent, and he will be sorely missed.

The Direction of the Department of Chemistry would like to express its condolences to his family and to all those who worked with Mr. Herman.

Normand Voyer, Full Professor, Department of Chemistry