

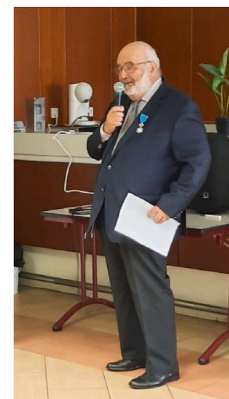
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# Free Radical Biology and Medicine

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## In Memoriam

### In Memoriam: Pierre Cillard (1942–2023)



Pierre Cillard was born on May 29th, 1942 in Dinan (Brittany), France, and passed away on June 2, 2023, in Lancieux, France.

We lament the loss of a great scientist, teacher and colleague, and equally importantly the loss of a very dear friend. The research fields of free radicals/redox biology and plant products, with special emphasis on efforts to improve human health benefited greatly from contributions of Pierre Cillard's scientific career, which mixed original ideas, mentorship and promotion of science.

His academic and scientific life was always associated with the University of Rennes. In this institution, he obtained the degree of Pharmacist in 1966, DEA in Geobotany in 1968, and Doctor of Pharmacy in 1974. In 1975 he obtained the Botany aggregation and was appointed Associate Professor of Botany and Plant Physiology at the Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Rennes. He was promoted to Full Professor of Botany, Plant Biology, and Nutrition in 1979. He maintained this position until his retirement in 2011. He was Dean of the School of Pharmacy between 1981 and 1988. Under his leadership, the Faculty of Pharmaceutical and Biological Sciences of Rennes was founded in 1988. Pierre acted in a number of academic and scientific positions, both locally in Bretagne and at the national and international levels. Importantly, he propelled student exchanges between the University of Rennes and Rhode Island University, the University of California, Berkeley, the University of Southern California, the University of Singapore, and the University of Liege. Pierre and Josiane Cillard's relationship with the Oxygen Club of California resulted in their organization of the extremely successful International Meeting on Nutrition, Oxygen, Biology and Medicine in Paris, France which was held five times between 2005 and 2013.

Based on previous studies on the enzymology of key plant components, and on his expertise in oil chemistry, in the middle 70's Pierre

started studies on the capacity of alpha-tocopherol to inhibit fatty acid oxidation. Surprisingly he observed that, at high concentrations,  $\alpha$ -tocopherol actually behaves as a prooxidant in linoleic acid micelles. These studies, with the invaluable collaboration of Professor Josiane Cillard, led to a long period of successful research on the mechanisms involved in the antioxidant/prooxidant actions of tocopherols. In the late 1980's Pierre began a new line of research into the radical scavenging activities of flavonoids; this nascent field focused attention on the effects of plant bioactive compounds in terms of both health effects and food protection. Subsequently, his research centered on iron and nitric oxide metabolism, and ethanol toxicity, using EPR as a major tool with which to characterize the presence of free radicals in various experimental models. All these scientific activities and ideas helped to initiate and promote free radical biology research in France.

Beyond his free radical research, Pierre headed a strong research unit that included other aspects of plant physiology, mentoring numerous successful scientists. He was able to lead and organize scientific activities that allowed the University of Rennes to establish a world-class center in Pharmaceutical and Plant sciences.

Because of his research on oxidants and antioxidants in biology, Pierre received numerous prizes and awards including, the Montgolfier Award (2004) and Chaptal Award (2009) from the Society for the Encouragement of National Industry (SEIN), Honorary Life Membership of the Oxygen Club of California (2005), and the Medal of the City of Rennes (2006). In 1997 the French government recognized Pierre as a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques (Knight in the Order of Academic Palms) and in 2022 he was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite (Knight of the National Order of Merit).

But, above all of this, Pierre loved family, friends and life!! His and Josiane's homes, were always open to all their scientist friends. All who have been received in their home and into their lives, know of their love for science and of Pierre's passion for Breton culture as represented by

wonderful foods, wines, and, always the sea. Many of his fellow researchers will have fond memories of enjoying champagne, 'huitres,' and 'bigorneau' with Pierre and watching the grand tides rise or fall as the sun set over 'la mer' in Lancieux. Pierre's deep humanity, larger than life presence, and contagious laughter will warm our hearts forever.

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