

## In Memoriam



### Jacques Dumont 1931-2023

Jacques-Emile Dumont passed away on February 6, at the age of 91. He was honorary professor of Biochemistry and Endocrinology at the faculty of Medicine and the faculty of Sciences of the Free University Brussels (ULB), co-founder of the European Thyroid association and had been president of the ETA between 1996 and 1998.

After a postdoctoral stay in John Stanbury's laboratory, in Boston, at the end of the fifties, JED (as he would usually sign) came back to the ULB and joined the laboratory of experimental medicine of PP Bastenie, an initiator of thyroid research in Belgium. With the novel availability of radioiodine, he founded with André Ermans the Laboratory of Nuclear Medicine (LMN) in 1963, which became the Institute of Interdisciplinary Research in Human and Molecular Biology (IRIBHM) that he directed from 1968 to 2001. The first contribution of Jacques Dumont to thyroid research relates to the physiopathology of myxoedematous cretinism, which he studied with François Delange and André Ermans. He pursued this subject decades later, with the discovery of the role of selenium in the pathogenesis of endemic cretinism. His main scientific achievements were the result of studies performed under his guidance in the Institute he created. Amongst the more important: dissection of the signal transduction pathways and the role of cyclic AMP in the thyrocyte; identification of iodinated intermediates involved in the negative regulation of thyroid function; demonstration of a mitogenic action of cyclic AMP on the thyrocyte; cloning of the main thyroid autoantigens; identification and cloning of the enzyme involved in H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> generation. Despite his official compulsory retirement, JED went on until recently, providing guidance to his favorite research dealing with thyroid cell proliferation, cancer, and thyroid physiology.

Jacques Dumont was literally an extraordinary character with many different facets, of which the main are certainly his drive "to build" and his aptitude for indignation to injustice, inequality and stupidity. Another one is his competitive mind, which derives probably from his activity as a basketball player. JED was a born leader, capable of inspiring the most placid personalities. Paramount was his capacity to support and motivate people in the lab, especially when, as is routine in research, things do not turn as expected. All this made him for about forty years, and beyond the limits of his Institute, the leader of an informal group of individuals who still recognize themselves as sharing his values.

His temperament made also the good days of many ETA meetings. We will miss him, standing up at scientific sessions or general assemblies, with questions or remarks that shook the audience.

Our thoughts go to Jacqueline, his wife and closest collaborator.

On behalf of all present and past members of IRIBHM,  
his friend Gilbert Vassart.

The ETA also send sincere condolences to the whole family.