

Lucia **DE BROUCKÈRE**

Born: July 13, 1904 (Sint-Gillis)

Died: November 3, 1982 (Elsene/Ixelles)

She is the daughter of a well-known Belgian politician: Louis de Brouckère. She spends her youth in England where she finishes primary and secondary schools. Entering the ULB (free University of Brussels), Lucia obtains a doctor's degree in chemistry in 1927. She starts her academic career as assistant to professor Jean Timmermans at the department of physical chemistry, followed by joining professor Pinkus at the department of analytical chemistry. After obtaining her qualification as a university professor she is appointed in 1937 to become the first woman in Belgium as professor of general chemistry. In 1939 she is in charge of setting up the training of future chemistry teachers in the secondary schools. At the start of WWII she is working in Paris and together with her father she escapes through Portugal to Scotland to end up working for the MoD. In 1945 Lucia is in charge of the department of chemical industry at the Ministry of Economy of the Belgian government in exile. When the German occupier closes down the ULB in 1941, the university reopens in 1945 and Lucia de Brouckère is ready to take up her old job as professor of analytical and physical chemistry.

Her quality resides in the creation of a department with emphasis on demonstrations and practical laboratory work. She is by and large concerned with the training of future teachers, the reform of the education and her political view on the role of science in society. From 1960 till 1962 she is again the first woman to become dean of the faculty of sciences. She also contributes to the foundation of a centre of scientific documentaries. Lucia de Brouckère has been the chairman and the honorary chairman of the Belgian Chemical Society and presided over the chemical council of the Atoomcentrum of Mol. In 1972 she sets up the Lucia de Brouckère Fund to allow Belgian researchers to study abroad.

Consistent with her philosophical ideas, de Brouckère is co-founder of the "Centre d'Action Laïque".