

**Maurice (Maurits) Verzele**

Born: January 21, 1923 (De Panne)

Died: September 1, 2008 (Ghent)

### **Biography**

Maurits's father, Julien Verzele was headmaster of the "Panne Instituut". Maurice attends the Rijksmiddelbare School of nearby Veurne (Furnes) and the Koninklijk Atheneum of Oostende (a "middelbare school" does not provide the obligatory secondary cycle of six years).

In 1945 he obtains a master's degree of chemistry at the University of Gent followed by a doctor's degree awarded for his study of lupulon, a compound of hops, a subject which will fascinate him during his further career. After being an assistant at the Laboratory of Pharmaceutical Chemistry of Professor Romain Ruysen (1901-1979), Maurice Verzele is appointed senior assistant from 1946 till 1957 at the Laboratory of Organic Chemistry of professor Firmin Govaert (1902-1993). In 1957 he becomes lecturer in organic chemistry at the University of Ghent for the bachelor and master degrees of chemistry followed in 1961 by a full professorship. He is in charge of the department of organic chemistry.

In 1971 he becomes a corresponding member of the Flemish Academy of Belgium for sciences and arts obtaining an honorary title in 1989. He is member of the Royal Chemical Society of the Netherlands and of the Royal Society.

From 1954 till 1957 he has his seat in the NFWO (National Fund for Scientific Research) and in this function chairs the committee for organic chemistry.

He was married to Denise Careel.

### **Bibliography**

Apart from his thorough research on hops Verzele is well-known for the study of separation techniques (counter-current distribution and gas chromatography). In 1970 he obtains the five-yearly prize Felipe Osborne.

Maurits Verzele holds a straightforward view on ethical dilemmas. In 1994 he publishes "De Milde Dood: Zelfmoord en Euthanasie" on the subject of suicide and euthanasia in which he is a staunch defender of the right of each individual to be in control of his own life and even provides -as a scientist- the (dis)advantage of some tips for suicide and euthanasia. The book is translated into French ("Mort en Douceur. Le Suicide et l'Euthanasie") and into German ("Der Sanfte Tod. Suizidmethoden und Sterbehilfe"). A later book "Hello Dolly! Kloneren in de Toekomst" (1998) deals with the subject of cloning.

(Translation Yves De Cock)