

Prof. Emeritus Léon Ghosez, FRSC



Léon Ghosez was born in Aalst, Belgium, in 1934. He studied at the University of Louvain where he got a PhD in 1958 under the supervision of Prof. G. Smets, His PhD thesis dealt with the kinetics of polymerization and copolymerization of N-vinylurethanes. He then spent 2 years as postdoctoral researcher at Harvard University (Prof. R.B. Woodward) where he studied a new method of N-terminal cleavage of peptides. He also collaborated for with Prof. R. Huisgen at the University of Munich where he discovered the first 1,3 dipolar cycloadditions of ketocarbenes.

He got his “Habilitation” at the age of 32 for his independent work on the stereochemistry of synthesis and rearrangement of halocyclopropanes. In 1969 he became “Professeur Ordinaire” at the University of Louvain where he created the laboratory of organic synthesis. He also hold appointments at the University of Liège (1969-1999) and at the Ecole Polytechnique in Palaiseau (1993-1999).

He took an active part in the creation of the Institute of Chemistry and Biology in Pessac (Bordeaux, France) in 1998. He then became “Emeritus” Professor at the University of Louvain and was appointed group leader at the University of Bordeaux 1. From 2000 to 2010, he shared the directorship of IECB with Dr J.J. Toulmé. In January 2010 he retired from this position and became a visiting scientist in the same Institute.

L. Ghosez has supervised 132 PhD students and 160 postdoctoral associates. He has published more than 200 original papers. His research interests involve the development of new synthetic methods and the total synthesis of biologically active molecules. His scientific contribution has been acknowledged by several international prizes and honours (Centenary medal of the Royal Society of Chemistry, Havinga medal.. Médaille de la Société Chimique de France.....). He is an emeritus member of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Belgium.