



## Guest Editorial

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This special issue of the journal is dedicated to the life and works of Abraham Warshawsky who died very suddenly on 12th November 2001 whilst on sabbatical leave in Paris. Abraham is remembered by his many friends and colleagues throughout the scientific world as a prolific researcher, teacher and scholar. As Shakespeare wrote in Henry VIII, act 4, sc 2:

“He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one,  
Exceeding wise, fair-spoken, and persuading.  
Loft and sour to them that loved him not;  
But, to those men that sought him, sweet as  
summer.”

Abraham was a true scholar of many talents in the field of pure and applied chemistry, with a wise, kindly, astute and persuasive manner. He was thorough and meticulous in the pursuit of knowledge and generous as a teacher and collaborator. I suppose that line 3 of the above verse does not really apply to Abraham since I never encountered any bitterness in him in 30 years of friendship, only disappointment at the occasional reversal of fortune in his long and distinguished academic career.

This issue contains contributions from many of his colleagues and collaborators across the world and encompasses a wide range of subject areas that are within the legacy of research touched by Abraham in his working lifetime. In all, 15 papers have been gathered together and this includes two of Abraham's last papers arising from the longstanding collaboration with Jose Cortina's group in Barcelona.

I am truly honoured to have contributed to this issue of the journal. I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to David Sherrington and Karel Jerabek, my co-Guest Editors, for their help in compiling and editing this special issue of the journal so efficiently. The Guest Editors would like to thank each author for their contribution and we hope that this special issue will represent a fitting tribute to our dear friend and colleague, Abraham Warshawsky, who was taken from us far too soon and who now rests in eternal peace.

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October 2002

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## In memoriam

Prof. Abraham Warshawsky

“**Even rocks break**” wrote Dalia Rabikowitch, a well-known Israeli writer, in one of her most famous poems. The strongest individuals can also be demolished, even as solid rocks. This was my first thought after being overwhelmed when my friend Nava Kahana, who was Abraham’s ‘right hand’ for more than twenty years, told me about his sudden and unexpected death. It was a total shock not only to me, but also to the many people who knew Abraham: family members, colleagues, past and present students, and friends from all over the world.

Abraham Warshawsky was a very special individual. He was a talented, original and inventive chemist, highly active and skilled in organizing scientific meetings, a fluent and appealing lecturer and an excellent teacher and instructor. Abraham had an ‘applied attitude’ towards research. He always asked himself, “what can be done with the compounds?” and not only “how can they be made?” He was not only interested in understanding nature, he wanted to be able to harness it to do a job! This approach, which is presently accepted, and often crucial, directed him throughout his research career, even in times when such an attitude hindered obtaining positions in prestigious centers, like the Weizmann Institute, and he paid a personal price. His fields of interest embraced organic and polymer chemistry; hydrometallurgy and extraction of metal ions from wastes and water bodies; catalysis; metal complexes;

chelating therapy; and, recently, he became fascinated by combinatorial chemistry. Abraham was captivated by the potential of the last-named field since it signified for him the combination of pure and applied chemistry. He committed himself to teach the subject in the Feinberg Graduate School of the Weizmann Institute of Science and to organize scientific meetings in this area. The last time I met him, rushing about and happy, was during the ISCT CombiTech 2001 conference, which he organized a few days before his untimely death. I remember him being full of energy, in high spirits and very proud of the establishment of the Israeli Society for Combinatorial Technologies, of which he was elected Chairman.

Abraham was a very warm individual and highly esteemed by his students and collaborators. He was an easy-going person, never imposing his opinion on the people around him, allowing many degrees of freedom to his students; in this way he helped educate a group of young, independent scientists.

I worked with Abraham for many years, at first as a senior member in his group and later, as a neighbor, sharing the same laboratory. I shall always remember the long talks that we had regarding scientific subjects, our families, politics, trips abroad and many versatile topics. I was always impressed by his common sense, good advice and sincerity. He was a special person and this is how I will remember him.

May his memory stay with us forever!

Rina Arad-Yellin

I had the privilege of knowing Abraham Warshawsky personally for a relatively short period of 10 years. I stress the adjective “personally”, because of course I knew Abraham as the author and co-author of numerous publications about functional polymers for much longer. For me, his papers were very attractive due to the merging of good basic science with applied aspects. That is why, when political changes in my country made possible free contacts with foreign colleagues, I approached Abraham with

an inquiry about workable cooperation. His response was immediate, warm and constructive, with specific proposals of how to proceed. As I found out later, when our cooperation gradually developed, this approach was characteristic of him. I found in him not only an accomplished scientist and professional, but most of all a good man and warm friend. His untimely death is a great loss to the scientific community but above all, we have lost a good man who will be missed by many.

Karel Jeřábek