

Obituario

Biographical profile of Doctor Raymundo Cruz Almanza (1945-2003)

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A sudden demise of Doctor Raymundo Cruz Almanza on October 21, 2003 made a hole in the chemical scientific community of Mexico. He was a distinguished scientist at the Institute of Chemistry, member of the Mexican Academy of Sciences, member of the National Research System and Professor at the Faculty of Chemistry of the National University (UNAM).

Doctor Cruz Almanza started his education in Atlacomulco, State of México, where he was born in 1945. Later, he joined at the National Prep School, and in 1970 received his B.Sc. degree in Chemistry from the School of Chemistry of the National University. His research dissertation was directed towards the synthetic chemistry of quinone and hidroquinone products [1]. Subsequently, he continued his postgraduate studies in Organic Chemistry at the Faculty of Chemistry, UNAM. His Ph. D. degree was conferred in 1976 on a research project related to the synthesis and mass spectrometry of filocladene, 3-metilen-colestane and tetrahydrocafest-17-ene [2]. He joined Professor Alan R. Katritzky (University of East Anglia, England (1977-1978), and later Professor Alexander McKillop (University of East Anglia, England (1981-1982) groups for his post-doctoral stays, where he pursued his research in the field of heterocyclic synthesis. In 1985, he did a stay at the Research Department of Syntex, Cuernavaca.

He was Professor at the Faculty of Chemistry of the National University since 1971, Researcher at the Institute of Chemistry since 1973, Professor at the State of México University (since 1975), and co-founder of the Postgraduate Chemical Studies at the Autonomous University of the State of Morelos. In 1996, he received the *Presa Estado de México* in the Scientific Area by the Government of the State of México.

Dr. Raymundo Cruz Almanza's research dealt with the chemical synthesis of substances of biological interest and the development of new synthetic methods. Among the later, the procedures to obtain aldehydes [3], the deprotection of tetrahydropyrane ethers [4], the preparation of ∞ -diazocetones [5], are to be mentioned. He completed the synthesis of some natural substances or their structural analogues, such as the isocostic acid [6], the *O*-methyl-cannabinochromene [7], peperomin C [8], demethoxyencecaline [9], and taxane diter-

penes [10], are among many others and he also made contributions in macromolecular chemistry [11] and cyclizations through carbenoids [12]. Recently, he has brilliantly directed his research to the development of a synthetic methodology employing free radicals [13-15].

Doctor Cruz Almanza was mentor of more than sixty students, who are also co-authors of his publications. In the last five years a total of about thirty papers was published in international journals of repute such as *Tetrahedron*, *Tetrahedron Letters*, *The Journal of Organic Chemistry*, *Supramolecular Chemistry*, among others, which reflects his leadership, high productivity, and scientific excellence.

His research is characterized through his commitment to the highest standards of research and his generous sharing of ideas and time has inspired innumerable students and colleagues to share his enthusiasm and joy for heterocyclic chemistry and related areas of chemistry.

He participated in almost a hundred national and international scientific events. His first contribution was presented in 1969, at the 4th Mexican Congress of Chemistry which was held in Mexico City, and for the last time in the last week of September 2003, participated in the 35th Mexican Congress of Chemistry, which took place in Ixtapa, Guerrero.

All through his academic career, Doctor Cruz Almanza was a scientist known for his extensive and generous institutional participation; he was more than ten times member of the Internal Council of the Institute of Chemistry, he was also three times member of the Technical Council of Scientific Research of the National University, and was also a University Councilor. He enthusiastically participated since 1997 in the modification of the Chemistry Postgraduate Program at the National University, he was also a member of several commissions and committees, and he was three times among one of the final candidates for the position of director of the Institute of Chemistry.

He had an affable disposition and a profound humane nature. Doctor Cruz Almanza was appointed as a Head of the Organic Synthesis Department of the Institute of Chemistry from 1995 to 1999, and from may 2003 to the date of his decease.

The Mexican Chemical Society condoles the demise of Dr. Raymundo Cruz-Almanza.

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