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Peter Timmins

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Roland May (1948–2021)

Roland May passed away on November 23, 2021 after a courageous 3-year battle with brain cancer.

Roland did his thesis under Walter Hoppe at the Max Planck Institut für Biochimie in Martinsried working on Hoppe's newly published method of label triangulation to determine the quaternary structure of the ribosome. He arrived at the ILL in 1979 and for several years was in the project to establish the quaternary structure of the ribosome by deuterium labelling and neutron scattering. His main collaborators were Heinrich Stuhrmann, Michel Koch, Knut Nierhaus and the Wittmann lab in Berlin. In the spirit of scientific excellence and fairness at the ILL, however, he also collaborated with a competitor, Don Engelman from Yale, who had an accepted proposal, earning the respect of all. Data quality and data analysis are all-important in small-angle scattering and Roland spent many years developing methods in a long and fruitful collaboration with Otto Glatter. In the early 1980s he and I worked closely together in the running and reconstruction of the emblematic SANS instrument D11, built by Konrad Ibel in the 1970s, to which he made numerous improvements. Many a long day (and night) were spent developing an automatic sam-



ple changer to allow users at least a few hours of sleep.

In the late 1980s Roland was given the task of designing and building the next generation of SANS instruments and so was born D22. The design and construction period was interrupted by the shutdown of the ILL reactor from 1992 to 1995 but, thanks to Roland's typical perseverance and determination, the instrument came on line in 1996. With its 1 m^2 ^3He detector, automated modular collimation and sample-detector distance variable from 1 to 17.6 m, D22 rapidly became the most highly demanded and powerful SANS instrument in the world in domains from biology and soft matter to magnetic scattering. In the following years Roland selflessly trained a generation of small-angle scatterers from around the world helping to promote the field far and wide,

particularly for applications in structural biology, but also in soft matter, chemistry, magnetic structures etc. He retired in 2008 having helped to create an unprecedented demand for the SANS technique and by this time a third instrument, D33, was already under design. To this day D22 has over 900 publications to its credit. Roland was an accomplished expert not only in instrumentation but also in the SANS technique, data treatment and interpretation, skills that he was always ready to share giving freely of his time to help and advice.

For those of us who worked closely with him he was an engaging character, always smiling, always ready to explain the intricacies of informatics—particularly for Mac users! He was first and foremost a profoundly human individual with a strong social conscience which he used to identify injustices and in the defence of young scientists. After retirement he continued to lend his informatics skills to the ILL retirees' association as one of the major organisers of their website. Roland leaves his wife of almost 50 years, Traudel, as well as two sons and four grandchildren, the last of which, to his great delight, was born just 4 weeks before his departure.

PETER TIMMINS
ILL, Grenoble, France