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Immediate Release

The passing of a great scientist — Dr. Jack Arthur Masquelier (1922-2009)

BORDEAUX, FRANCE

Legendary and amiable French scientist Jack Masquelier, one of the great pioneers in the fields of phytochemistry and human health, died Tuesday, 24 February. He was 86. Dr. Masquelier passed away quietly, in the presence of his beloved wife, children and grandchildren. He was buried on Saturday, 28 February 2009.

Sixty years ago, in July 1948, Jack Masquelier published his doctorate thesis upon the successful isolation and chemical description of the phytonutrient we know today as oligomeric proanthocyanidins or OPCs. That same year he filed a patent for the industrial method of producing the first botanical product based on OPCs.

Based on Dr. Masquelier's groundbreaking and always innovative role in the research and development of OPCs-products, their isolation, identification and therapeutic and dietary applications, two botanical products followed. In the 1960s, a botanical medicine based on OPCs isolated from *Pinus maritima* bark saw the light of day, followed ten years later by an OPCs-based medicinal product manufactured from *Vitis vinifera* seeds. In France, these medicinal products are still sold today. During the 1980s these complex, but well characterized phytonutrients, were introduced on the natural products market. Today, Masquelier's OPCs are sold around the world as dietary supplements.

The postwar period, when Masquelier began his research, was marked by a surge in interest in flavanols, the group of bioactives to which proanthocyanidins belong. In 1951, Australian scientist W.G.C. Forsyth first isolated flavanols from fresh coco-beans. In that same year, using Masquelier's OPCs, the English phytochemist E.C. Bate-Smith, working at Cambridge (UK), developed and first described a coloration method to detect the presence of proanthocyanidins in plant materials.

Masquelier's scientific work was seminal in the early development of two areas of science: phytochemistry and human health. Finding that the nomenclature used in the fields of phytochemistry and botany could easily lead to confusion and imprecision when applied in the field of dietary and pharmaceutical products, Masquelier, together with his lifetime friend and colleague Dr. Jean Michaud, focused on, and succeeded in the characterization of OPCs-based products in conformity with nutritional and pharmaceutical standards, thus fitting for the field of human health.

Through tireless scientific investigation, Dr. Masquelier revealed the numerous health benefits of OPCs. The key early finding of Dr. Masquelier was that OPCs strengthen and protect blood vessels and vascular function, so essential for the function of every organ in the body. This set in motion a series of independent clinical studies by several other scientists that sustained Dr. Masquelier's findings and provided conclusive support for the use of Masquelier's OPCs-compounds in the French vasculo-protective medicines.

In 1985, Dr. Masquelier was able to further explain the intense and instant positive effects that OPCs have on the human body when he discovered that OPCs neutralizes free radicals, the common cause of seemingly unrelated degenerative conditions and early onset of age-associated changes in the body. He found that OPCs are powerful antioxidants and are unique in their ability to work in both aqueous and lipid phase to provide superior antioxidant support.

All of Dr. Jack Masquelier's discoveries have greatly influenced human health worldwide, and have gained great significance in this era, when life expectancy has increased while accompanied by an equally dramatic increase in cardiovascular and other degenerative diseases. His products have grown in relevance in a world that has fundamentally changed since their discovery.

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