

Prof Lorenzo Testaferri

A Tribute

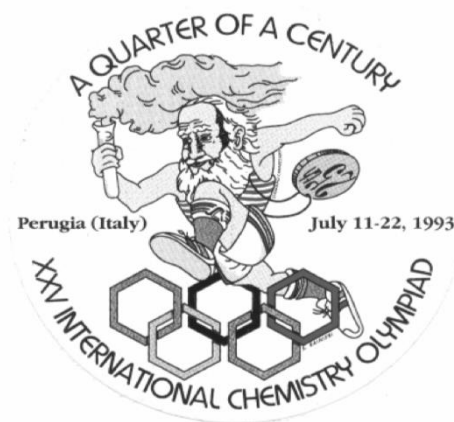


This special issue dedicated to Professor Lorenzo Testaferri to commemorate his 75th birthday and to acknowledge his contribution to Organic Chemistry as researcher and as teacher

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Lorenzo Testaferri was born in Chiaravalle (AN-Italy) on October 20, 1943. He studied chemistry at the University Alma Mater of Bologna where he graduated in 1970. After graduation, he carried out research in the Faculty of Chemistry at the same university before being appointed as Assistant Professor of Organic Chemistry at the University of Bari where he remained until 1978. In that year, he moved to the Faculty of Pharmacy at Perugia University where he taught “Physical Methods in Organic Chemistry” and “Organic Chemistry II”. In 1993, he became full professor and Chair of Organic Chemistry working together with Prof. Marcello Tiecco. Throughout his entire career he undertook several responsible positions including president of the council for the libraries of chemical, pharmaceutical and biotechnological sciences, president of the local section of the Italian Chemical Society (1992-1995), director of the Institute of Organic Chemistry (1996-1999) and Head of the Department of Chemistry and Drug Technology (2000-2013). Prof. Testaferri always invested a great deal of effort into his didactic commitments. In addition to his expertise, his students appreciated his humanity and his passion for transmitting knowledge in the field of advanced organic chemistry. He retired in 2013 but continued to be a source of inspiration to all his former co-workers.

In 1993 he served as Co-Chairman for the organization of the “XXV International Chemistry Olympiad”, a particularly important event because it celebrated a quarter of century of this worldwide appreciated meeting.



The logo of the “XXV International Chemistry Olympiad” and a moment of the closing ceremony with Prof. Testaferri on the right of the table

Prof. Testaferri published more than 150 papers in renowned international journals and his research interests included structure and reactivity of organic free radicals, homolytic aromatic *ipso* substitution reactions, cross and homo coupling reactions, and new synthetic procedures promoted or catalysed by organoselenium compounds. His research at Perugia University began the study of nucleophilic aromatic substitution of non-activated substrates and metal-mediated coupling reactions and led in 1986 to the total synthesis of Orellanine, the cytotoxic toxin produced by the mushrooms *Cortinarius orellanus* and *Cortinarius rubellus* reported in Poland some years earlier to be responsible for severe poisoning.

In the field of organoselenium chemistry, he was particularly active in the use of electrophilic reagents for addition reactions and cyclofunctionalizations in the synthesis of heterocyclic compounds. The use of optically pure diselenides was shown to control the formation of new stereogenic centres in the synthesis of

optically enriched compounds. In the last period of his career, he was also involved in the development of novel, efficient, catalytic protocols promoted by organoselenium compounds using water as an economic and reusable reaction medium.

From a personal point of view and as a former student and co-worker of Prof. Testaferri, I take the opportunity to thank him, on behalf of all the organic chemists in my department for his teaching and enthusiasm for organic chemistry. Approaching the celebration of his 75th birthday we wish him, his family (his wife Aldina, his sons and grandchildren) all the best and we thank him sincerely for his scientific contributions and the strong human values that he promoted during his career and after his retirement. All of us consider him a mentor and co-worker, but most of all, a friend.

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Selected Publications

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