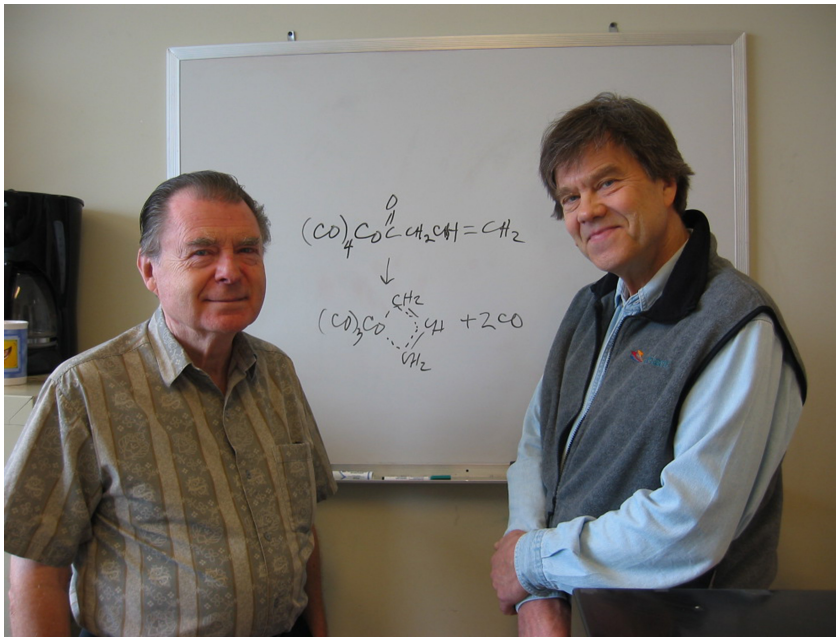
Obituary

Richard Heck, 1931–2015

We deeply mourn the passing of Professor Richard Heck on October 10, 2015 in Manila, the Philippines. But, at the same time, we celebrate with respectful sentiment his monumental contributions to chemistry and many allied fields. As may be gleaned from obituaries,[1,2] Heck placed into undeniable view of chemists, transition metals as conduits for types of reactions previously unknown. There was catalysis by palladium, as recognized by the award of the Nobel Prize in 2010 (with Ei-ichi Negishi and Akira Suzuki) which evolved and is now the Mizoroki–Heck reaction; but there was also the coupling of vinylboronic acids with acrylates and acetylenes with aryl halides without copper catalysis,[3] which were harbingers of the venerable Suzuki–Miyaura and Sonogashira reactions, respectively. Heck also placed the hydroformylation reaction on a firm mechanistic footing, first characterized a p-allyl cobalt complex, and systematically studied organocobalt carbonyls, an area that appears to be in renaissance.

In 2006, ***Synlett*** celebrated his contributions by a Special Issue, for which there is a handwritten introduction and a personal description of his remarkable original research contributions.[4] Chemists will continue to celebrate the legacy of this major scientist of the last half-century and unpretentious and warm-hearted human.

(1) Snieckus, V. *Nature* **2015**, *527*, 306.
(2) Colacot, T. *Angew. Chem. Int. Ed.* **2015**, *54*, 2.
(3) (a) Dieck, H. A.; Heck, R. F. *J. Org. Chem.* **1975**, *40*, 1083; (b) Dieck, H. A.; Heck, R. F. *J. Organomet. Chem.* **1975**, *93*, 259.
(4) Heck, R. F. *Synlett* **2006**, 2855; with a non-paginated hand-written note and a dedication by Taber, D.; Snieckus, V.



Richard Heck (with Victor Snieckus), Queen's University, 2006. "You know, I would like to follow up some of my cobalt chemistry…that is, if it has not been done."

Victor Snieckus, Kingston, December 2015