

Volker Jäger (1942–2021)

When Professor Volker Jäger passed away on March 19, 2021 in Stuttgart, the chemical community lost one of its notable members. An avowed Franconian, Volker Jäger was born in Nuremberg (Nürnberg) in 1942 and studied chemistry at the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, graduating with a diploma thesis on the equilibrium between the isomers of nitropropene. Research for his Ph.D., completed in 1970, was performed at Union Carbide in Brussels, the Université Catholique de Louvain and the University of Erlangen with Heinz Günther Viehe. After a postdoctoral stint with R. B. Woodward at Harvard, joining in the final efforts at the total synthesis of vitamin B12 (1971–1973), he moved to the Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen, where Volker Jäger obtained his *venia legendi* for organic chemistry in 1979. The use of isoxazolines and optically active components in synthesis raised attention in the community and led to an offer for an Associate Professorship at Würzburg in 1980 (during the deanship of Siegfried Hünig), as well as international recognition, with invitations to research institutions, conferences and high-level workshops, such as the GRC. In 1992 he was offered a chair at the University of Stuttgart, where he remained until his retirement. Volker Jäger also held positions as visiting

professor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, the Université de Rennes I, the ESCIL de Lyon, the Dyson Perrins Laboratory at the University of Oxford, the Université de Paris-Sud, and the University of Heidelberg. He made significant contributions to synthetic organic chemistry by developing new cycloadditions with nitrile oxides, new synthetic routes to amino sugars, Pd-catalyzed oxycarbonations of unsaturated polyols, glycosidase-inhibiting iminopolyols, and expanding the chemistry of nitro compounds.

Volker Jäger published over 200 papers in peer-reviewed journals, and his article on the stereoselective addition of nitrile oxides to allyl ethers alone has been cited almost 400 times. He loved to teach, he enjoyed discussing science, he had a wry sense of humor, he was generous, and he was cosmopolitan in his views. Volker Jäger placed great importance on the quality and breadth of organic chemical education, including experimental aspects. Sometimes, this got him into discussion during the efforts to curb the corresponding curriculum in the new millennium. He could be adamant in his convictions, and his integrity became evident during the incident relating to the eventually refuted claim for asymmetric induction by static magnetic fields. Even though he was formally retired more than ten years ago, Volker Jäger remained a visible member of the Institute of Organic Chemistry at the University of Stuttgart, right until his sudden death. During his lifetime, he served the scientific community by bringing together chemists from all over the world as the organizer of formal and informal scientific meetings. One of his best-known activities was initiating and organizing the 'Tag der Organischen Chemie' at the University of Stuttgart (TOCUS), a yearly symposium held for almost 25 years that culminates in the Thieme Lecture in Organic and Bioorganic Chemistry that attracts a large group of organic chemistry aficionados to our campus each fall. Volker Jäger was a member of the Editorial Board of SYNTHESIS in the years 1985–1989, and he remained a member of the Honorary Advisory Board of SYNTHESIS until 2008. He himself published approx. 20 articles in this fine journal. Volker Jäger did not live to witness the 25th Thieme Lecture in Organic and Bioorganic Chemistry at the University of Stuttgart, but his legacy will live on well beyond the day it will be held. - We mourn the loss of a remarkable scientist.

C. Richert, W. Kaim; Stuttgart, April 2021