

Dear Colleagues:

I write with great sadness to tell you that Marc Chabre died on July 10, 2010. The cause of death was cancer.

Marc was a nuclear physicist who had already worked and published for 10 years before his first biological experiment. He made a number of important contributions to biology, especially to visual phototransduction and G protein signaling. His neutron diffraction studies of the disc membrane in the early to mid 1970s were really transformative and stimulated and motivated a generation of biochemists (see Saibil). Marc's work with Hermann Kuehn led to the identification of visual arrestin (see Pfister). His 1985 Annual Reviews piece on phototransduction was required reading for a decade. Later, in a nice bit of biochemical detective work, Marc showed that the famous activating effect of NaF was really due to fluoroaluminates that formed spontaneously when NaF was dissolved in glass tubes. He showed that aluminum tetrafluoride could bind in the gamma phosphate position in GDP-bound G proteins and mimic an active state GTP-bound structure (see Bigay). This work led to an important series of studies on small G proteins that are being carried on today by Marc's former students. In recent years, Marc gained new acclaim as a voice of caution in the debate over the physiological requirement/role of GPCR dimerization.

Marc was one of the formative figures in my own early training and career. He accepted me, as the youngest participant, to the now famous NATO Advanced Study Institute on Membrane Biophysics and Intracellular Communication in Les Houches, France in the summer of 1979 (see attached poster). This meeting exposed me to many of the great leaders of our field during its infancy and I was able to make friends and contacts that have lasted >30 years. Marc and I became close friends over the years and I was honored to be able to give a testimonial at his retirement celebration in 2007 in Valbonne. Marc was absolutely passionate about science and he was a stimulating conversationalist. As a member of the French Academy of Sciences he was a great supporter of interdisciplinary science.

Quantitative biology has lost a great advocate and friend. I will miss Marc tremendously.

Sincerely,

Tom

