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# Electronic Journal of Biotechnology

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/ejbt](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/ejbt)

In memoriam

## In memoriam – Vitalis Moritz

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Professor Vitalis Moritz passed away last January 14, 2023. This very sad event implies a significant loss to biochemical engineering and biotechnology, especially for the Latin America academia. Professor Moritz made an outstanding contribution to these disciplines, especially in the field of fermentation engineering and in the teaching and diffusion of biochemical engineering as an emerging discipline.

Dr. Moritz graduated in chemical engineering and industrial chemistry from the School of Chemistry at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Brazil in the mid-sixties. A few years after graduation he became a faculty member of the School of Chemistry of said university. He received his doctoral degree from UFRJ with a thesis developed at the University of Tokyo under the guidance of Professor Shuichi Aiba. His brilliant academic career at that university culminated with his appointment as Full Professor first, and then, after his retirement, as Emeritus Professor.

He was responsible of introducing biological courses in the chemical engineering curriculum and in the creation of the Depart-

ment of Biochemical Engineering in the School of Chemistry of UFRJ. In 1970, he established a graduate program on Bioprocess Technology that after few years evolved to a master and a doctoral program in Chemical and Biochemical Process Engineering.

In 1971 Professor Moritz was visiting scientist with Professor Arthur Humphrey at the University of Pennsylvania where he co-guided a PhD thesis. During his stay in Philadelphia he was invited to deliver a seminar to the biochemical engineering group at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In that occasion, we met and established the basis of a long lasting relation with our School of Biochemical Engineering (EIB) at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile, and started a close friendship for over 50 years. In 1977, he was invited to give a two-week international course on biochemical engineering at EIB; he was also Visiting Professor at the First International Course on Biotechnology at EIB in 1980 together with Professor Rodolfo Quintero from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM).

After his retirement, Professor Moritz was appointed Emeritus Professor at UFRJ and maintained a close relation for over 10 years with EIB, being a regular Visiting Professor each year during the spring semester, receiving the hierarchy of Affiliated Professor from PUCV. His pioneering work in biochemical engineering has enlighten the way of many young scientists and engineers all over Latin America.

Beyond his relevant academic merits, Professor Moritz also stood out for his humanity and gentleness, always willing to guide and help anyone asking for his advice. He remains vividly present in the minds and hearts of many.

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