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Jean David is gone (1931-2021)

Jean David, director of research at the CNRS, died on June 19, 2021 at the age of 90.

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Jean David was one of the last active members of this generation of French researchers who made *Drosophila melanogaster* a model of evolutionary genetics in the 1970s and 1980s. He thus contributed to provide a singular opportunity to extend the accumulated knowledge on the genetics and development of this species to the study of the mechanisms of adaptation and speciation.

Jean David was recruited as a preparator in the laboratory of zoology at the University of Lyon in the early 1950s. He did his D.E.A. and then his Ph.D. under the supervision of Victor Nigon on the effects of the feeding environment on phenotypic variability in *D. melanogaster*. After a short stay in Scotland, Jean David became professor of biology in Lyon, where he founded a team "Entomologie Expérimentale et Génétique", associated with the CNRS. The team then joined the Biometry laboratory, directed by Jean-Marie Legay, to form a new unit, which became the current UMR 5558 "Biometry and Evolutionary Biology". In the early 1970s, he collaborated with several researchers at Gif-sur-Yvette and at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle on the study of the Afrotropical fauna of *Drosophilidae*. Since the end of the 1970s, he has been strongly involved, with colleagues from Paris and Montpellier, and with strong support from the CNRS, in the national promotion of a genetic and evolutionary approach to "Population Biology", contributing to the development of a field that was still underdeveloped in France at the time, and whose success has been well known.

Following the death of Charles Bocquet in 1977, then director of the Evolutionary Biology and Genetics laboratory at Gif-sur-Yvette, Jean David resigned from the University of Lyon, joined the CNRS as DR1 and was appointed director of this laboratory. Under his direction (1978-1992), he made this laboratory an internationally renowned "center of excellence" in evolutionary genetics of *Drosophila*. Jean David retired in 1996 but continued to work at Gif-sur-Yvette as a researcher emeritus until October 2020, when illness finally prevented him from continuing his experiments on his large collection of *Drosophila*.

Throughout his scientific career, which lasted almost 70 years, Jean David was a passionate and tireless worker. He published more than 400 papers, most of them on *Drosophila*, dealing with subjects as diverse as systematics, biogeography, ecophysiology, morphometry, phenotypic plasticity, genetics, behavior, reproductive isolation and more recently evo-devo and genomics. This considerable and much appreciated scientific production has made him one of the main international authors in the field.

A great traveler, Jean David traveled the world for the study of *Drosophila*. He celebrated his 80th birthday aboard the Marion Dufresnes during an exploration of the Eparses Islands and he carried out his last field mission, at the age of 87, on the island of Grande Comore.

An outstanding naturalist and entomologist, an exceptional experimenter, a rigorous and uncompromising scientist, involved in national scientific bodies (CNU, National Committee, INRAE), Jean David was able to transmit his enthusiasm to his students and directed many theses. Several of his students have gone on to successful scientific careers in France and abroad. He was also recognized internationally, not only in the United States and Europe, but also in Russia, Africa, India and Brazil, where he still travelled regularly.

His former students and colleagues, proud to have worked with him, will not forget what they owe him and deeply miss this great scientist who was their friend. They join in expressing their deep sadness and sympathy to his family and friends.

Jean David's former students and colleagues

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