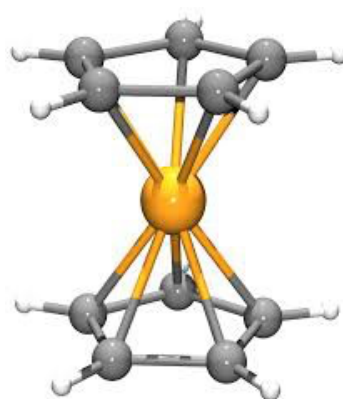
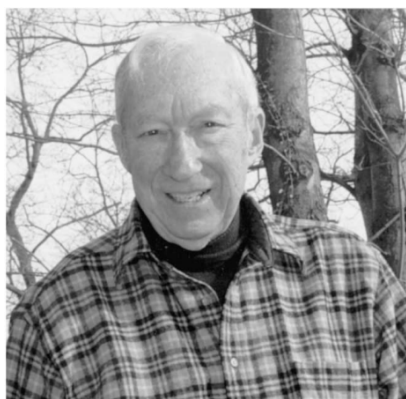


## Myron Rosenblum (1925-2016)

By Bruce Foxman (co-authored by Richard D. A. Hudson)



Professor Myron (Mike) Rosenblum was born in New York in 1925. After serving in the US Army in the 87th infantry between 1943 and 1946 in Europe, he returned to the USA to study chemistry at Columbia University, where he received his BA degree in 1949. His contributions to organic and organometallic chemistry began auspiciously in 1952 when, as a graduate student working with Professor R.B. Woodward at Harvard University, he elucidated the structure of ferrocene (later to be nicknamed an iron “sandwich” compound) and provided the first evidence of its aromatic character. He was awarded a PhD degree in 1954 and moved to Columbia University as a postdoctoral fellow for two years, followed by a position as Assistant Professor at the Illinois Institute of Technology. He then returned to Boston to take up a position as Assistant Professor at Brandeis University in 1958. He became Full Professor in 1966, a position he held until formally retiring in 1997. During this time he served as department chair for a year and held the Charles Breskin Professor of Chemistry chair for the last 10 years of his tenure. His retirement, however, did not mark an end to his chemical interests, but allowed him the freedom to return to the bench.

Myron’s students were a select group that had the wonderful opportunity to collaborate with him and to participate in stimulating discussions, as well as in a potpourri of fascinating, inventive, and exciting chemistry. When I arrived at Brandeis as an Assistant Professor of Inorganic Chemistry in 1972, I was immediately welcomed into that select group. All of us had the opportunity to observe the extraordinary insight and creativity of this remarkable man, as well as to be mentored by him in the early stages of our careers. Although the ideas of mentorship were undeveloped in the Department at that time, Myron set a standard that taught this colleague how to best mentor students and junior colleagues.

Myron’s work as a graduate student at Harvard, with the Nobel Laureate Robert Woodward, set the stage for a reawakening of interest in the inorganic and organic chemistry of the transition elements and opened the door to a new field: organometallic chemistry, with its profound effect on the methodology of synthetic organic chemistry and the use of metal-containing compounds for the catalysis of chemical transformations in solution. During his early independent career in the period 1955 – 1970, he continued to make important contributions to an understanding of the chemistry of ferrocene, especially of intra- and

interannular ring effects and of the mechanism of electrophilic substitution in ferrocene. In 1964, he published the seminal book, *The Iron Group Metallocenes*, detailing the progress made during the first ten years of metallocene chemistry.

During the middle of his career he focused principally on the chemistry of organoiron complexes, and especially on the use of these as reagents and synthons in organic synthesis. Professor Rosenblum was one of the first to recognize the importance of organometallic chemistry in organic synthesis. His research in this area, detailing the preparation of numerous transformations of organoiron compounds, which incorporate the cyclopentadienyliron dicarbonyl group, form a coherent and important body of chemical literature. A strong focus on mechanistic detail and stereochemistry forms an important and unifying focus throughout all of this research. In 1974 and 1986, he published overviews of his work, covering more than 60 papers, in the journals *Accounts of Chemical Research* and the *Journal of Organometallic Chemistry*.

During the last seven years of his active career, his research interests turned increasingly toward the synthesis of metallocene polymers and oligomers in which the individual metallocene units are constrained to a face-to-face, stacked arrangement through their peri-substitution on a naphthalene spacer element. The electrical, magnetic, redox, and optical properties of these polymers, designed as a new type of “molecular wires”, formed an important focus of his final contributions to the chemical literature.

Myron made many contributions to the chemical community at large, including his service on the editorial boards for both the *Journal of Organometallic Chemistry* and *Organometallics* during the 1980s and as an Advisory Board member of the Petroleum Research Fund of the American Chemical Society. His keen interest in the literature and its dissemination recently led him to set up a project that seeks to find new homes in the Third World, particularly Nigeria, for collections of scientific journals and books. His chemical career took him to many places, including the award of a Guggenheim Fellowship that transported him and a young family to Imperial College London. This was followed by a series of visiting professorships at The Technion, Hebrew University, Ben Gurion University, and The Weizmann Institute of Science as the Meyerhoff Visiting Professor. He published over 130 papers and mentored over 70 students during his career.

Myron delivered many plenary and invited lectures at academic conferences around the world, but his great love of New England and its beautiful seasons always brought him back. Not only was Myron a great chemist but he was also an accomplished craftsman-artist; in his home workshop in Lexington and in Danbury, New Hampshire, he designed and built furniture, art pieces and wood turnings that were not only practical, but beautiful in appearance. He was also an accomplished outdoorsman, and continued in that vein after retirement, together with his wife Rachel, camping and canoeing in northern New England, and as far afield as the Arctic Circle.

I am sure that anyone who has known or worked with Myron will appreciate that his warmth, humanity, inspirational scientific approach and knowledge has equipped his friends and trainees with a bountiful currency that has touched our lives deeply. We will miss his smile, his chemistry, his wisdom and his friendship.

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