



## Tribute/Hommage

The education of François Garin, or an example of how to not only assume existence but transcend it

*La formation de François Garin, ou l'exemple d'un homme qui non seulement assume l'existence, mais aussi la transcende*



Photo of François Garin by Anny Garin

*Long journeys start with a small step...*

François Garin was born on 15 February 1947 in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, a place close to Paris, and became connected to the city during his early scholarly and private life. While in Rueil-Malmaison, in the vicinity of Paris, he spent his younger years from kindergarten to college.

His favorite subject in school was mathematics, which he independently studied beyond the class requirements. His report cards showed steady improvement, particularly in science courses, and he rapidly gravitated toward chemistry. He ranked near the top of his class and decided early on to pursue a career in chemistry. He began his chemistry studies in 1962, at 15 years of age. He attended courses at the Gay-Lussac Institute in Paris to earn his diploma as an assistant chemist (1965). In the same year, he obtained his first job at the Kuhlmann Chemistry Company in Paris. Overly ambitious and persevering, he continued to attend evening courses in general chemistry and electrochemistry at the "Conservatoire national des

arts et métiers" (CNAM, Paris) to obtain a "Certificate of General Chemistry and Electrochemistry" in 1966. As an enthusiastic connoisseur of Greek culture, he readily understood that "By changing, our life makes sense, or nothing endures but change" (Heraclitus). He decided to go to Strasbourg, where he received the diploma of Technician Chemist ("technicien supérieur chimiste", 1967–1968) from the state technical college ("lycée technique d'État"). Beginning in 1968, he pursued a classical course in chemistry and physical chemistry at the University Louis-Pasteur of Strasbourg, obtaining a "DUES de physique et chimie" in 1969. His interest in chemistry continued, as evidenced by his authorship of the "maîtrise de chimie physique" (1971) and his pursuit of the "DEA de chimie organique" ("option substances naturelles", Louis-Pasteur University). Notably, he received chemistry work experience during his junior year, wherein he spent his holidays working for financing part of his studies.

François Garin increased his prestige by preparing three theses: the "troisième cycle" thesis in Organic Chemistry (1973), a PhD in Physical Sciences (1978), and the "habilitation à diriger des recherches" (HDR, 1986). After these theses, he held postdoctoral positions in the labs of Albert Frennet at Bruxelles (ULB) and Gabor Somorjai at Berkeley, USA.

In 1973, he joined CNRS as a technician. In his infinite wisdom, he decided (in 1981) to participate into the competitive entrance examinations for a CNRS researcher position. As a CNRS researcher at the University of Strasbourg, he worked within the group of Prof. François G. Gault.

*Ipsa facto, the days pass and the years fly...*

After having taught and worked as a Research Director at CNRS for 39 years, in 2012, he was named Emeritus Director Researcher at CNRS (just 100 years after Ipatieff), a

honorable position that permitted him to continue teaching and researching for several years at the University.

The myth of Icarus never leaving his mind, François Garin is an example of how to succeed in life through ingenuity, or how to live one's dreams while keeping one's feet on the ground.

The education of François Garin is a fascinating symphony of life.

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