

The eminent Turkish theorist Feza Gürsey died on 7 April. He was best known for his development (with Luigi Radicati) of SU6 particle symmetry in 1964, one of the landmarks of modern theory.

After initial studies in statistical mechanics, electrodynamics and general relativity, he became interested in the underlying symmetries of basic physics. Although appointed to the Middle East Technical University in Ankara in 1961, he continued to be a frequent visitor to the United States. On one such visit, to Brookhaven in 1964, he and Radicati noticed how the SU3 (quark) symmetry very much in vogue at the time could be readily combined with spin angular momentum to make an appealing new SU6 picture of particle 'supermultiplets', with powerful new predictions.

In 1968 he moved to Yale, and in 1977 was appointed to the prestigious Gibbs chair. He retired from Yale last year. His later work was much concerned with basic symmetries, where he showed the power of the (exceptional Lie) groups E6, E7 and E8, and with applying mathematical approaches, such as quaternions and octonions, to basic problems.

He was influential in promoting Turkish physics, and it was natural that a high proportion of his students came from that country. He shared the Oppenheimer prize with Sheldon Glashow in 1977, and was awarded the Wigner medal in 1986.