Frans Verbeure 1942–2003

Frans Verbeure, head of the Particle Physics Group at the University of Antwerp, passed away on 8 June after a long illness.

Born on 6 February 1942, Verbeure began his research career in the early 1960s, under the leadership of Fernand Grard, at the Laboratoire des Hautes Energies in Brussels. His research initially centered around the vigorous bubble-chamber physics programme, which had started in Saclay and continued at CERN. When the Universitaire Instelling Antwerpen (UIA) was created in 1972, he became the youngest professor in the Physics Department, and remained there until his untimely death.

Recognizing the importance of national, as well as international, collaboration, Verbeure associated his research group closely with the other experimental particle-physics groups at the Université Libre de Bruxelles and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. In the early 1980s, under his leadership, the UIA group expanded its activity from bubble-chamber experiments to "hybrid" experiments. When the time of the bubble chambers was over, the group took part in the Belgian effort in DELPHI at LEP, and over the past eight years Verbeure's efforts were directed towards the active participation of his group in the CMS experiment at the LHC.

Verbeure's talents as an efficient administrator were recognized early in his career, and he took on several important duties as head of the Physics Department, dean of the Science Faculty, president of the University Research Council and vice-rector of the UIA. He was also an active member of the Belgian Federal Council for Research Policy and the Flemish Interuniversity Council. For two years he became dean of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts, and last but not least was a member of the Belgian delegation in the CERN Council and Committee of Council. In all these activities, his actions were inspired by a great sense of duty and service to the community.

Despite all these roles, Verbeure never lost his excitement for particle physics. As permanent secretary of the International Symposia on Multiparticle Dynamics (ISMD) he ensured the continuing success of this series of conferences in a field to which he devoted a major part of his research. As a scientist he always had a clear grasp of the problems at hand and of the most efficient way to solve them. Frans Verbeure was admired and respected by his collaborators and students and will be remembered as an extremely kind and helpful colleague and friend, full of joy, optimism and activity.

From his colleagues and friends.