

Tom Ypsilantis 1928–2000

Detector virtuoso Tom Ypsilantis died in Geneva on 16 August. Born in 1928 into a Greek family living in Salt Lake City, he studied physics at Berkeley where he obtained his master's degree and then became a graduate student of Emilio Segrè. Together with Owen Chamberlain and Clyde Wiegand, he joined the historic 1955 experiment at the new Bevatron that observed the first antiprotons. It was the subject of his PhD thesis.

After postdoctoral positions in the US and after playing a pioneer role in teaching modern physics in Greece, he came to CERN in 1968 and met Jacques Séguinot. This was the origin of a lifelong friendship and, at the same time, of a series of proposals and realizations of innovative particle detectors. Ypsilantis was a most inventive physicist, always ready to discuss his ideas and to share them with others. His imagination was conceiving instruments that, being well in advance of their time, were often difficult to construct, and here Séguinot had a lot to contribute. Ypsilantis and Séguinot, working in Max Ferro-Luzzi's group, proposed the technique later named Ring Imaging Cherenkov (RICH) counter. Together

with Tord Ekelöf they introduced this technique for high-energy physics: the first large-scale application was for the DELPHI experiment at LEP. More recently they worked in the framework of the LAA Project on noble-liquid calorimetry and on a very large water neutrino detector based on the fast-RICH technique. The "AquaRICH" was described by Ypsilantis as "a Superkamiokande with spectacles". He also made a major contribution to the LHCb experiment at CERN.

His scientific goal was the invention and construction of detectors capable of opening new avenues in experimental particle physics. He was so knowledgeable in this field that in 1995 he became editor of *Nuclear Instruments and Methods*. To realize his dreams, he never considered personal interests or, even less, career advancement. Thus, over the years he was associated with CERN, Ecole Polytechnique, Collège de France and recently, INFN. At times he was even without a position and a salary, but still he continued to work as ever. He will be sadly missed by the high-energy physics community.
His friends.