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A moment at the Institute of Ophthalmology

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David Maurice was a very special person. Everyone who worked closely with him knows that and at the same time realizes the difficulty of describing him well, because he had so many facets worth remembering.

For me, he was and will always be the brilliant and original scientist always looking at things in new angles, perceiving new perspectives and having fun doing so. At the same time he respected science tremendously and took it very seriously.

I have many good memories of him. One that happened with me took place one day, in London, in the Institute of Ophthalmology, in Judd Street, when I had the chance of working with him. His laboratory was also his office. It was extremely unpretentious, particularly his desk. One day, David was taking from one of his desk drawers a typed manuscript that looked very much ready to be sent for publication and I asked him what it was about. He answered that this manuscript described some work that he had done a few months ago, and that he had placed it in the drawer of his desk to let some time pass by. Now, he had some spare time and he felt that it was the occasion to look at it again and repeat the experiments reported there, to check the results and verify if they were the same. As a young student who was starting to realize the permanent pressure to be the first to publish any new piece of work, I was very much surprised by this behaviour and I immediately asked him if he did not want to have the first paper published on that subject. No, he answered, not at all, I just want to have the best paper on the subject, he said. This conversation was never forgotten, and it is typical of David Maurice, demonstrating particularly his attitude to scientific research.

We still can see his eyes, brilliant with enthusiasm when he had a new idea and was ready to test it in the laboratory.

He loved to test new ideas and to devise the ways necessary to perform the appropriate testing. He liked to live in a world of his own, where there was no place for fools,

bureaucracy, or anything that sounded like hypocrisy, small talk or was just plain boring.

He loved the research work he did all along his life, the challenges involved and every opportunity to do it. He would work anywhere, at any place, and to him it was not

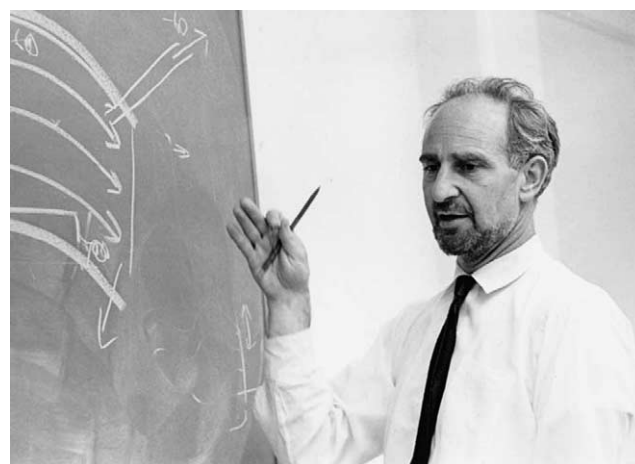


Fig. 1. Teaching in London.



Fig. 2. Panel discussion: David Maurice, Jose Cunha-Vaz, J. Francois, Gabriel Coscas, G. Quentel.

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work but almost child's play. He just needed to have around him young people with new ideas and an open schedule.

His contributions to ophthalmological and vision research are many. Everyone knows them and, if not, this special issue will demonstrate well his seminal influence to so many excellent researchers. This book will give, certainly, a full perception of his many achievements,

the different areas of research he has touched and the many scientists that his work has affected and directly influenced.

My memories of David Maurice include words such as brilliant mind, originality, fun and open schedule. Minimal rules, maximal originality. I believe that the best research is done this way, David Maurice's way.