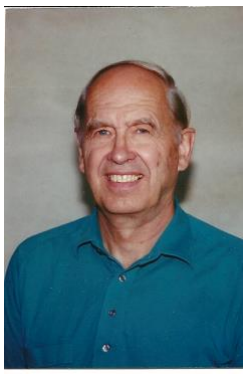
Engelbert Ciganek
1930-2025



Engelbert (Bert) Ciganek was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia on October 19, 1930. As members of the German-speaking minority, Bert's family was expelled in 1946 after spending ten months in internment. Bert completed his secondary education in Nuremberg, Germany, in 1950 and received the Diplomchemiker degree from the University of Erlangen, Germany, in 1956 after spending the 1954–1955 academic year at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. He received his Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1959 with Professor Arthur C. Cope (second Editor-in-Chief of *Organic Reactions*). He subsequently spent two years as a postdoctoral fellow with Professor Cope, further strengthening a professional relationship that would shape his scientific career.

Bert joined the Central Research Department of DuPont in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1961 and transferred to the Medical Products Department in 1981, and then to the DuPont Merck Pharmaceutical Company in 1991, from which he retired after 33 years of service in 1994. During his industrial career, Bert authored 46 journal publications and was an inventor on 20 US patents, reflecting both scientific creativity and sustained productivity in an industrial research environment. He published a highly influential series of articles on intramolecular Diels–Alder reactions. Bert was one of the developers of the reverse Cope elimination, namely the addition of hydroxylamine to an alkene to form an amine oxide, which has become a standard tool in organic chemistry. He was also the chair of the Gordon Research Conference on Heterocyclic Chemistry in 1980, a role reserved for scientists of exceptional standing in the field.

Bert was on the Board of Editors of *Organic Reactions* from 1983 until 2000. He then served as an exceptionally active Editorial Advisor from 2000 until his death in 2025, during which he carefully reviewed virtually every submitted chapter, often in multiple rounds, thus ensuring that the publication maintained the high standards of accuracy, rigor, and consistency for which *Organic Reactions* is known. In practice, Bert functioned as one of the principal stewards of the series' scientific and editorial identity. Bert's contributions have been invaluable to the series' success. His unwavering commitment to helping authors present material in the clearest, most thorough, and most authoritative manner was remarkable, as was his profound and wide-ranging knowledge of synthetic organic chemistry. Everyone associated with *Organic Reactions* will feel his absence, irrespective of their role.

Bert was the most prolific *Organic Reactions* author over the 85-year course of the series, serving as author or co-author on eight chapters, a distinction unmatched in the publication's history. Bert was the sole author for three chapters: The Intramolecular Diels–Alder Reaction (Volume 32, 1984), The Catalyzed α-Hydroxyalkylation and α-Aminoalkylation of Activated Olefins (The Morita–Baylis–Hillman Reaction) (Volume 51, 1997), and Electrophilic Amination of Carbanions, Enolates, and Their Surrogates (Volume 72, 2008), each of which became a definitive reference in its respective area. He was a co-author for an additional five chapters: α-Hydroxylation of Enolates and Silyl Enol Ethers (Volume 62, 2003), The Krapcho Dealkoxycarbonylation Reaction of Esters with α-Electron-Withdrawing Substituents (Volume 81, 2013), Copper-Catalyzed Amination of Aryl and Alkenyl Electrophiles (Volume 85, 2014), The Julia–Kocienski Olefination (Volume 95, 2018), and The Matteson Reaction (Volume 105, 2021), demonstrating extraordinary intellectual breadth across reaction classes and mechanistic paradigms. He also translated two chapters from German into English: The Wittig Reaction (Vol. 14, 1965) and The Catalyzed Nucleophilic Addition of Aldehydes to Electrophilic Double Bonds (Vol. 40, 1991), thereby expanding the accessibility and international reach of the series.

Bert passed away on November 19, 2025. He is survived by his wife, Mary Jo, with whom he shared 60 years of marriage; their four children, Emily, Peter, Anna-Maria, and Danny; and their five grandchildren, Gillianne, René, Oscar, Miranda, and Emilia. He is remembered not only for his seminal scientific contributions but also for his integrity, generosity, and lifelong dedication to

advancing the rigor and clarity of the chemical literature. His legacy is inseparable from the enduring excellence of *Organic Reactions*.