The French and the American Chemical Societies Honor the Career of a Professor from the University of Houston

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Based on the important collaborations between the French and American chemistry communities, the Société Chimique de France (SCF) and the American Chemical Society (ACS) signed a cooperation agreement on December 1, 2016. This agreement intends to support and promote French-American cooperation in chemistry, across research, innovation and education. The partnership includes cooperation on outreach activities aimed at popularizing chemistry in everyday life, both in France and in the United States, the joint organization of events around global challenges, such as energy and environment, and collaboration on professional development and soft-skill training for young chemistry professionals. Furthermore, the agreement establishes the France-America Chemistry Lectureship Award that will be granted alternately to French and American chemists involved in collaboration between the two countries.

The first SCF-ACS award was granted to Dr. Karl M. Kadish, Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen University Professor at the University of Houston since 1976. Dr. Kadish is a leading chemist in the study of porphyrins and their derivatives. Initially studied for their roles in hemoglobin and photosynthesis, these molecular compounds are now considered as promising candidates for a wide range of applications from cancer treatment – photoimmunotherapy – to solar cells.

With more than 600 peer-reviewed publications, Dr. Kadish is a world class expert on porphyrin chemistry who has also edited more than 80 books. He is also behind numerous initiatives aimed at structuring the international community working on porphyrins, such as the creation of the Society of Porphyrins and Phthalocyanins, based in Dijon, France. Dr. Kadish has served as president of the SPP since 2000.

In addition to a remarkable scientific output, the France-America Chemistry Lectureship Award rewards a career marked with long-lasting major collaborations with France. Dr. Kadish spent many sabbatical leaves in French research laboratories (Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Université de Strasbourg, Université Lyon 1 and Université de Bourgogne), and co-published almost 250 papers with French scientists with whom he also co-edited handbooks on porphyrin science. He launched several exchange programs with Université de Bourgogne and Ecole Supérieure de Chimie Industrielle de Lyon (now Ecole supérieure de chimie, physique, électronique de Lyon) between 1985 and 2005. Through these programs, around 100 French students were able to obtain internships at the University of Houston and 24 of them graduated with a Master’s of Science or PhD degree. Since 2003, Karl Kadish holds an honorary doctorate from the Université de Bourgogne in recognition of his close and active scientific ties to this university. His collaboration with France continues notably through the company PorphyChem, created by Prof. Roger Guilard, professor emeritus at the Université de Bourgogne.

Following an official SCF-ACS award ceremony to be held in 2018, Dr. Kadish will go on a lecture tour in three French research laboratories to present his work.