

## In memory of Dr. Olivier Toussaint

Florence Debacq-Chainiaux · João Pedro de Magalhães

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Our friend, mentor and colleague Olivier Toussaint passed away on November 30, 2016, at the age of 50. Senior Research Associate of the Belgian National Fund for Scientific Research (FNRS), he established his research group twenty years ago in the Laboratory of Cellular Biology (URBC) of the University of Namur. He always loved to share his passion for research with students, through the course on ageing and senescence he delivered at the university, but also by guiding them through their

doctoral training. His research activities were first focused on the interactions between stress and cellular senescence, and he was a pioneer in the concept of SIPS or Stress Induced Premature Senescence. He then turned his attention to the toxicity of nanoparticles and created a new group on this subject. Author of more than 100 scientific publications, he was renowned for his expertise beyond Belgium. Readily, he developed European and international collaborations. He was a partner and coordinator of several EU projects in his two areas of research. In particular, he was responsible for two European coordination actions, “Linkage” and “WhyWeAge”. These actions resulted in a series of thematic workshops allowing people in the ageing field to connect and collaborate but also to raise awareness of European policymakers on the importance of ageing and the need to support ageing research. By virtue of his visionary and entrepreneurial leadership, Olivier developed several lines of innovative research and was one of the founding pillars of the Straticell company and of the Namur Nanosafety Center. Although he rarely spoke of his illness, he was conscious of its progression and lived his life and his career in the fast lane. The number of projects he brought is impressive, as was his ability to create research networks. Through the research he carried out, the researchers he guided and inspired, the networks he initiated, his creativity, his energy, his kindness and his enthusiasm led to the admiration of all those who met him. We already miss the discussions we had with him, both at the scientific and personal levels. More than a colleague, he was for many of us an inspiration and a friend.

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F. Debacq-Chainiaux (✉)  
Stress and Ageing Group, URBC-Narilis, University of  
Namur, Namur, Belgium  
e-mail: florence.chainiaux@unamur.be

J. P. de Magalhães  
Integrative Genomics of Ageing Group, Institute of  
Ageing and Chronic Disease, University of Liverpool,  
Liverpool, UK