

RAOUL KOPELMAN

October 21, 1933 - July 20, 2023

GRAVESIDE SERVICES: TUESDAY, 07/25/2023, 11:00 AM AT
ARBORCREST CEMETERY.

Raoul Kopelman of Ann Arbor, MI, died July 20, 2023, at the age of 89.

Raoul Kopelman was born in Vienna, Austria on October 21, 1933. His parents were Chaja Klara Mencil Koppelman (Toporowce, at the time part of Galicia in the Austro-Hungarian Empire 1898 - 1974 Ann Arbor MI USA) and Josef Koppelman (Pistyn, Galicia 1877 - 1950 Tel Aviv, Israel). Raoul had three older sisters, who were daughters of Josef and Adele Kahane Koppelman (Galicia ~1884 - 1927 Vienna): Anna Koppelman Hellreich (Galicia 1907 - 1999 New York), Josephine Pepi Koppelman Brod (Galicia 1908 - 1960 New York), and Franceska Franzi Koppelman Alt (Vienna 1917 - 2007 Vienna).

His father, Josef Koppelman was a soldier in WW I, an entrepreneur, and founded Lux Film Gesellschaft, bringing sound films to the German speaking world and music-based films, including operettas. His mother, Klara Koppelman had a classical German education and worked as an X-ray nurse. Raoul had a wonderful early childhood. It was disrupted by the

Anschluss, the annexation of Austria in 1938. His father was arrested by the Nazis and spent 10 months in Buchenwald. Raoul and his parents escaped from Vienna on April 1, 1939 at night on a long train ride to Zurich, Switzerland. Later that month, they took a train to Trieste, Italy. An eight day boat ride on the Galilea brought them to Tel-Aviv on April 24. Raoul started elementary school on September 1, 1939, the day WW II began. His childhood classmates became close friends for 84 years.

Tumultuous times followed. In this historical context, a belief in science as the key to a better future grew within him. While studying for his undergraduate degree in Haifa, Raoul met Chava Blodek, also from Vienna (1931, born Eva), who would be his wife of 62 years until her passing in 2017 (Ann Arbor). They married on September 15, 1955.

Raoul Kopelman received his BS in Chemical Engineering at the Technion, Israel Institute of Technology (1955), as well as an Engineering Diploma (1956) and an MS in Physical Chemistry (1957). He was the first Israeli to receive the US Fulbright Travel Grant (1957). He earned his Chemistry PhD at Columbia University (1960). He did his postdoctoral training at Harvard (1960-62).

Dr. Raoul Kopelman became an expert on photonics, laser and bioanalytical chemistry, chemical physics, catalysis, nano-materials and nano-devices. He was a professor at the University of Michigan for 57 years (1966-2023); the Richard Smalley Distinguished University Professor of Chemistry, Physics, Applied Physics, Biophysics, Biomedical Engineering and Chemical Biology; Member of The Michigan Nanotechnology Institute for Medicine and Biological Sciences, The Michigan Biointerfaces Institute, and The Rogel Cancer Center.

He mentored over 70 PhD students of Chemistry, Physics, Biophysics and Applied Physics, who launched successful academic careers as professors at primary universities, or pursued excellence in industry and government. Professor Kopelman has been celebrated for his leadership, research, and educator role in the materials nanoscience community, for key developments in percolation theory applications and fractal kinetics, and for developing NanoChemistry and NanoBiochemistry scientific paradigms and tools, integrating these into Nanomedicine to treat life-threatening diseases.

Raoul Kopelman was a beacon of light to his family, his students, science, and medicine. He will be missed by family, friends, and colleagues around the world. Most of all by his three children and two granddaughters: Orion Kopelman (1962, Boston); Leeron Kopelman (1963, Haifa); Shirli Kopelman (1968, Ann Arbor) and her daughters Talia Kopelman (2009, Ann Arbor) and Yasmin Kopelman (2010, Ann Arbor). And by his nephews Manfred Brod (1934, Vienna) and Ernie Brod (1938, Vienna), and Dr. Alfred Hellreich (1934, Vienna). Raoul's niece Edith Hellreich Goldman (Vienna 1929 - 2011 New York) preceded him in death. He was preceded in death by his loving wife, Chava Blodek Kopelman (Vienna 1931 - 2017 Ann Arbor). May his memory be a blessing and his legacy an inspiration.

Interment:

Arborcrest Cemetery

Officiator:

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein

Cemetery Details

Arborcrest Cemetery

Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Previous Events

GRAVESIDE FUNERAL SERVICE

JUL **25**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Arborcrest Cemetery
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Tribute Wall

EH

“ I am so sorry to just learn of this on line by accident.
My late mother was Sophie Koppelman-
Hellreich.
Sincerely,
Estelle Hellreich- Baumgart

Estelle Hellreich-Baumgart - September 09, 2023 at 09:58 PM

RP

“ So sorry to hear this sad news. I had an opportunity to work with him as a collaborator in several projects, including a program project grant funded in a joint collaboration of Roswell Park Cancer Institute, University of Buffalo and University of Michigan. We published several scientific papers and a U. S. patent on polyacrylamide nanoparticles, We are still working on this an an efficient delivery vehicles for certain photosensitizers at Roswell Park Cancer Institute for the treatment of cancer by photodynamic therapy. He was not only a great scientist, but also a wonderful human being. In this selfish world, it is very difficult to find people like him. He will be missed.

Ravindra K Pandey - August 04, 2023 at 01:55 PM

SR

“ We briefly met and shared Vienna memories. Raoul Kopelman impressed as a wonderfully spirited Mensch. His genuine view on life and his beautiful smile will be missed.

Sonja Rauschütz - August 02, 2023 at 07:36 AM

GX

“ I work with Dr. Kopelman briefly when I first started my career in academia. His dedication to science encouraged me to persist over difficulties. I will always miss him.

Guan Xu - July 25, 2023 at 11:11 PM

MS

“ It is heartbreaking to think that the man who defined how I approach science has passed away. He captivated me the moment that I met him and that feeling never changed. He was willing to take scientific risks like no other person I have known. I visited with him a few years ago and unsurprisingly, he could still out think me despite being in his 80s. His impact was not only on me but also on every student that I train. It is comforting to know that his scientific legacy lives on in his students and his students' students. God bless you Prof. Kopelman.

Michael Shortreed - July 25, 2023 at 02:07 PM

HM

“ 1 file added to the album Funeral Service



Hebrew Memorial - July 25, 2023 at 01:51 PM

TS

“ Dr. Kopelman was my PhD advisor. It was such a valuable time for me. He accepted new ideas and had a lot of good discussions how to move the project forward.
I still miss the inspiring environment he created so much. I'll remember him and the team he built forever.

Teppei Shirakura - July 25, 2023 at 01:12 PM

BF

“ My condolences to Professor Kopelman's family. A chance encounter at Camp Michigania in 2022 gave me the opportunity to spend time with this remarkable man who had a substantial impact on the life of my son, over 35 years earlier.

Bonnie fauman - July 25, 2023 at 10:36 AM

EF

“ Dr Kopelman was my undergraduate research advisor in 1987 and helped me publish my first paper. Last year he bumped in to my sister at Camp Michigania and recognized the Fauman name from 35 years earlier.
This led to be spending an evening with him last summer where we recounted the research from 1987 and everything since then.
He was a great teacher and a wonderful human being. He will be missed.

Eric Fauman - July 24, 2023 at 10:39 PM

IS

“ Professor Kopelman was truly one-of-a-kind and his scientific legacy will be continued by myself and the students he had mentored through those years.

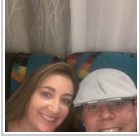
I first met Professor Kopelman at visitation weekend; from that meeting, I decided to attend UMich so I can be a part of the Kopelman Lab. It was one of the best decisions in my life - I was mentored, nurtured and challenged scientifically. He shaped me into the person I am today and I am forever grateful.

Irene Sinn - July 24, 2023 at 01:12 PM

AJ

“ During my rotation in his laboratory, Professor Kopelman was a key early source of inspiration for me regarding the possibilities of nanotechnology and chemistry. As a young graduate student, I found that his mentorship style offered enough freedom for me to gain confidence as an independent thinker while still providing enough of a compass to keep me focused on the problem at hand. I fondly remember his ability to cut through needless jargon and get to the heart of a problem, often accompanied by a chuckle and a twinkle in his eye. The world has lost a great scientist and mentor -- Dr. Kopelman will be missed.

Alex Johnson-Buck - July 24, 2023 at 12:16 PM



“ Professor Kopelman was my PhD advisor. I was always impressed with his humility and humanity. He had a genuine interest in people and always practiced a gentle kindness. I appreciate the curiosity, the technical skills, and the people skills I learned working in his lab. My time in Ann Arbor was transformational and The University of Michigan and Ann Arbor will not be quite the same without Dr. Kopelman. Much love to his family, friends, collaborators, and former students.

Murphy Brasuel - July 24, 2023 at 12:06 PM



“ Prof. Kopelman has been and always will be my role model and advisor not just only for science but also for my career objectives. What he taught me throughout my graduate school set the basis of my current philosophy and I could not thank more. He was more than a PhD advisor to me. I will always remember him.

Chang Lee - July 24, 2023 at 09:25 AM



“ Ever since I started as Assistant Professor in the department, Raoul was one of the most welcoming senior faculty, revealing his genuine interest in other people as well as the future of the department. He trained his junior mentees to become very strong scientists, and his supportive, thoughtful advice made an impact on many. He will be sorely missed, both as a colleague and human being.

Nils Walter - July 24, 2023 at 09:23 AM

HH

“ Professor Kopelman shaped thinking across disciplines—and also across generations. I remember introducing him to my still-muddled dissertation idea. We were sitting on his back patio, surrounded by trees, with his daughter (my mentor and friend, Shirli) and his granddaughters, Talia and Yasmin. I felt honored by the bright attention he brought to clarifying my research questions. But my favorite part of the discussion was the contribution of Talia and Yasmin—who were maybe 10 and 12 at the time. As he did for countless others, he encouraged and made room for their ideas in ways that let them uniquely shine.

Hilary Hoyt Hendricks - July 24, 2023 at 07:27 AM

AH

“ I had the privilege to be Dr. Kopelman's graduate student for 5 years. He was a wonderful mentor, and I am forever grateful for his wisdom, guidance, the opportunities that he opened up for me. He also treated me with kindness and respect. I remember sitting in his office, amidst the piles and piles of papers, books and magazines, impressed by both the sheer volume of his scientific productivity, as well as his ability to know exactly what was in each pile. 5 years after I graduated, I came back to visit the university with my wife, and found my poster hanging in the hallway outside the lab; I couldn't believe it was still there! Dr. Kopelman was a great scientist and leader, and he will be greatly missed by so many.

Ariel Hecht - July 23, 2023 at 09:18 PM

AH

“ Our hearts go out to Shirli, Orion, Leeron, Yasmin and Talia,

Raoul was such a warm and engaging man; he smiled easily, thought deeply, shared openly. We always enjoyed talking with him....even when he was challenging us on what we thought. He had a sparkle in his eye and a generosity of spirit that will be missed.

*With deep sympathy,
Andy and Joanne*

Andy Hoffman - July 23, 2023 at 04:26 PM

FY

“ *The passing of Professor Kopelman is profoundly shocking, and my memories vividly recall the time 22 years ago when I joined his group as a postdoc. He was much more than a mentor; possessing an innate ability to listen and understand, offering valuable advice that extended beyond research. The impact he had on my life during my two years at U Michigan is immeasurable. His unwavering faith in my abilities pushed me to grow as a researcher, encouraging exploration of new ideas and innovative approaches to problems. As I continue my academic journey, I am resolute in honoring Professor Kopelman's memory, embodying his wisdom and showcasing the dedication and enthusiasm he had for research. I aspire to inspire future generations of researchers, just as he inspired me. In these challenging times, I extend my deepest condolences to Professor Kopelman's family. Their loss is shared by all whose lives were touched by his remarkable presence. The world has lost an exceptional individual, but his impact will continue to reverberate through the work of his students and colleagues.*

Fei Yan - July 22, 2023 at 07:37 PM

EB

“*Raoul was my half-uncle, which was incongruous because he never did anything by half. He was fully invested in his profession, his students and his family. He embodies the best of old Europe, early Israel and modern America. Science has lost a towering figure and his family has lost a sheltering patriarch. Ernie Brod*

Ernie Brod - July 22, 2023 at 05:56 PM



“*Professor Kopelman was an amazing mentor and friend. Of all the people I have met in my life, he represented the true spirit of a scientist. He was creative, open-minded, and kind. I carry on many lessons to this day that he taught me through instruction and by his example. His passing is a great loss to many.*

Brandon McNaughton - July 22, 2023 at 02:39 PM