

**Prof. Nien-Chu Yang
(1928-2008)**

**Emeritus Professor since
2000 at The University of
Chicago**



Yang's Family

Hometown: Yangchen Village, Cixi County (now within the Ningbo City), Zhejiang Province.

Born on May 1st, 1928, in Shanghai.

Born into a scholarly family, his great-grandfather Yang Taixiang achieved the position of Jinshi (the highest level in the imperial examination) during the Qing Dynasty. His grandfather, Yang Jiaji, passed the Jinshi examination in the 16th year of the Guangxu reign (1890). The Yang family of Cixi had marital connections with the Tong family of Yintai in neighbor County, one of whom was married to Miss Tong from the Yang family. His grand father-in-law was Tong Xiangxiong (a Jinshi scholar in the 9th year of the Guangxu reign). However, after the marriage of his and the Tong family, they did not have children together, so Yang took concubines (Yang's grandmother). Yang's father was Yang dilong, who went to Shanghai for business at an early age. He became a prominent figure in the shipping industry and served as a council member and secretary-general of the Shanghai Shipowners' Association.

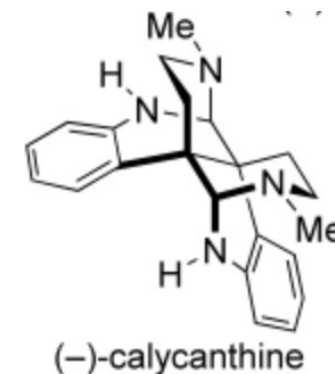
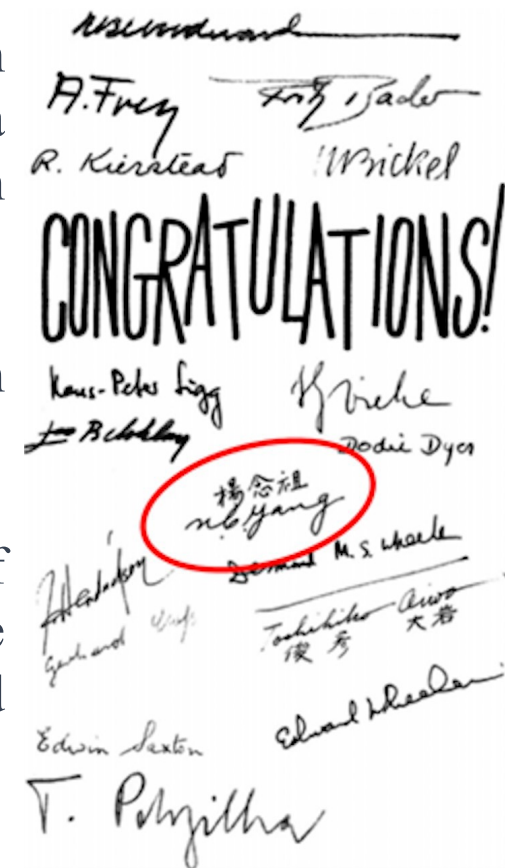
Biography

In 1944, Yang graduated from the Department of Chemistry at St. John's University in Shanghai, earning a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry at the age of 19. He also received a special award as the sole graduate. After graduating, he stayed at the university as an assistant. In the autumn of 1948, he went to the United States.

In 1952, he obtained a Doctor of Philosophy degree under the supervision of Morris Karasch from the University of Chicago.

From 1952 to 1955, He conducted postdoctoral research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology under the guidance of George Büchi, From 1955 to 1956, he conducted the second postdoc studies (Involved in the total synthesis of Calycanthine) at Harvard University under the guidance of Robert B. Woodward.

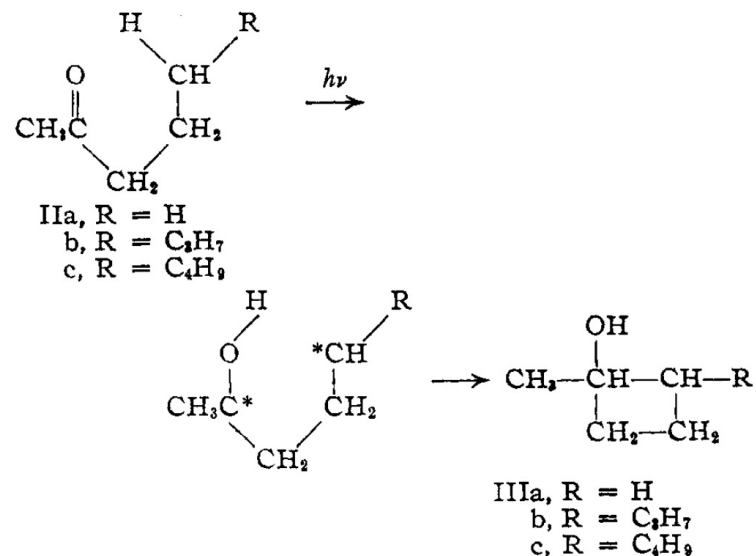
In 1956, Yang returned to the Department of Chemistry at the University of Chicago as an assistant professor. In 1961, he was promoted to associate professor, and in 1963, he became a full professor. In 1962, due to his outstanding achievements, he was named a Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago. From 1992 to 2000, he held the position of the Gustavus F. and Ann M. Swift Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago, which is the highest honor for a faculty member at the university. In 2000, he became a professor emeritus at the University of Chicago.



Contributions in science

Professor Nien-Chu Yang's research area: organic photochemistry, the reactions induced by light in organic compounds.

Norrish-Yang reaction



INSTITUTE OF ORGANIC CHEMISTRY
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
CHICAGO 37, ILLINOIS

N. C. YANG
DING-DJUNG H. YANG

RECEIVED APRIL 7, 1958

In 1987, Yang's discovery of a new type of **luminescence—chemical light emission**. This type of luminescence is responsible for the light of fireflies, predator fish and in the deep sea, and some micro-organisms. But until Yang's discovery, luminescing chemicals were unstable or short-lived, making them difficult to study.

During his career, Yang also conducted research on **compounds associated with the growth or inhibition of cancer and with the electronic characteristics of organic substances**.

Yang excelled as a teacher as well, having received the University's Llewellyn John and Harriet Manchester Quantrell Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and the AMOCO Prize for Distinguished Contribution to Undergraduate teaching.

Life

Yang's wife Ding-Djung, his scientific collaborator for many years. Ding-Djung received her Ph.D. in chemistry under John Sheehan from MIT and is a Senior Research Associate in Chemistry at the University of Chicago.

In addition to his wife, Yang have three children Charles, Julia Ann and Morris, as well as three grandsons.

Died on Thursday, Oct. 2. Yang, a longtime resident of Hyde Park at Chicago, was 80.

*Ref: [https://factpedia.org/wiki/%E6%A5%8A%E5%BF%B5%E7%A5%96_\(%E9%99%A2%E5%A3%AB\)](https://factpedia.org/wiki/%E6%A5%8A%E5%BF%B5%E7%A5%96_(%E9%99%A2%E5%A3%AB))
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