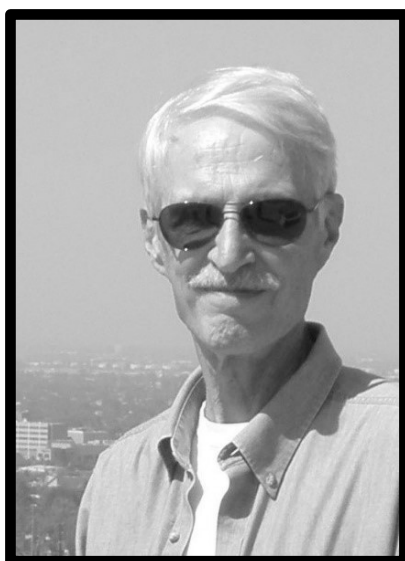


## In Memoriam Dr. Randall C. Baselt (12.02.1944 – 15.05.2021)

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When asked on his retirement how he had learned to write so accurately and so concisely, the long serving Deputy Editor of the *Lancet* David Sharp responded with some feeling ‘The first million words were the worst’.

Having spent much of the latter part of my own career writing reports, papers, and books, I know only too well what he meant. This being said, starting a new piece of work is never easy, the more so when at the back of your mind you knew a certain day would come when you would likely be tasked to write a tribute to a much-admired friend and colleague.

It is thanks to Prof. Torsten Arndt and the *Gesellschaft für Toxikologische und Forensische Chemie* (GTFCh) that I was privileged to learn so much more about Randy Baselt and his career prior to his sad death from pneumonia on 15 May. Prophetically on viewing the video I pre-

pared to accompany the presentation of the 2021 Jean-Servais Stas GTFCh medal to him<sup>(1,2)</sup>, Randy said ‘You did a great job of making me sound almost human. I will pass it on to Lana to use as my obit’. Alarm bells rang at that point, but I took some comfort in the thought that he had received the medal and with it the acclaim of all who work in the field of analytical toxicology. Indeed, no-one has done more to help us in our day-to-day work thanks to his careful and systematic compilation of analytical data over the last 50 years. His wife Lana, the production arm of the team, comes a close second of course.

As to Randy himself, I admit I only spent some six days in his company in 2013, having made a pilgrimage to meet him and his wife, a long-term complaint restricting his ability to travel in later life. He was all I expected from our email correspondence that stretched back many years. Indeed, I felt we must have common ancestry somewhere, because whilst generous almost to a fault, he like I could make saving money into an art form when appropriate! One especially memorable visit was to Drum Barracks Museum in Wilmington, housed in the last remaining original wooden building of the 22 structures built as a military post in the Los Angeles area during the American Civil War (1861–1865). Randall enjoyed the trip immensely, not having been aware of the museum’s existence until prompted.

One thought that sadly I never managed to run past him was the similarity I now recognise betwixt him and Dr. Michael Lederer (1924–2006), founder (1958) and long-term editor of the *Journal of Chromatography*. Both pioneer communicators in their fields (many early analytical toxicology papers were published in the *Journal of Chromatography*), and both of a gentle, helpful disposition, but incisive of thought, although in truth Lederer became somewhat obsessive re. ‘his’ journal in later life. I was fortunate enough to meet Michael Lederer at a couple of *Advances in Chromatography* meetings in the late 1970s/early 1980s (‘you write good papers’). I was also lucky enough to have dinner with gas chromatography pioneers Ervin sz. Kováts (1927–2012) and Lutz Rohrschneider (1927– ), but that as they say is another story.

Of course, the world of chromatography has grown massively in the ensuing years, as has the field of analytical toxicology, as evidenced by the ever-increasing membership of TIAFT, GTFCh and related societies and the ever-growing content of *Disposition*.

Clearly, *Baselt's Disposition of Toxic Drugs and Chemicals in Man* will continue and develop in whatever form is deemed appropriate because it is indispensable in our day-to-day work even in these days of the internet. It will stand as a monument to Randy's vision and hard work in the same way as his mentor Louis Casarett (1927–1972) is remembered in *Casarett & Doull's Toxicology: The Basic Science of Poisons*.



A recent photo of Lana and Randall.

It only remains for me to express my sincere condolences to his widow Lana (Figure above) and to his son David and the rest of his family for their loss and at the same time say thank-you Randy for the friendship and the wisdom you brought to our dealings over the years. It is so typical of his modesty and his thought for others that he didn't want a funeral so as not to put his family and friends to the 'trouble' of attending.

May he rest in peace.

Robert J. Flanagan  
(London)

- [1] Laudation by Robert J. Flanagan: <https://www.gtfch.org/cms/images/stories/events/Mosbach2021/RC%20Baselt%20Laudation.mp4>  
[2] Reply by Randall C. Baselt: <https://www.gtfch.org/cms/images/stories/events/Mosbach2021/Randall%20Baselt%20Speech%2020210416.mp4>

Die GTFCh hat von dem plötzlichen Ableben Ihres erst im April 2021 ausgezeichneten und damit jüngsten Stas-Preis-Trägers Dr. Randall Clint Baselt (Californien) mit großer Bestürzung und Betrübnis erfahren. Wir sind gleichzeitig dankbar, dass wir ihm diese hohe Auszeichnung noch persönlich, wenn auch leider pandemiebedingt nur in einer Videokonferenz, überreichen und damit sein enormes Lebenswerk würdigen konnten.

Unsere Gedanken und unser Mitgefühl gehören seiner Familie, insbesondere seiner Ehefrau Lana, die Dr. Baselt in all seinen publikatorischen Aktivitäten maßgeblich unterstützte.

Der Vorstand und die Mitglieder der GTFCh