

In memoriam Jacques Wynants

Jacques Wynants ? our ?big Jacques? as senior colleagues at CegeSoma recall him ? has passed away in the manner in which he desired: quietly, discretely?

He left us on Sunday 18 November 2018, in the wake of the First World War commemorations, which in recent years had taken a lot of his attention as a passionate researcher.

An unusual curriculum

Born on 28 July 1940 in *Liège*, Jacques Wynants spent most of his professional life as a secondary school teacher.

After his training he took up studies in History and obtained a Master's Degree in History in 1982 from *Université catholique de Louvain (UCL)* with a thesis about the city of Verviers and the liberation at the end of the Ardennes battle.

He was a professor for some twenty years at the *Institut Sainte-Claire* in *Verviers*, and became head of the *Saint-François-Xavier* institute in 1984 until his retirement.

The history of the Second World War was a life-long passion of Jacques. This particular interest may originate in his personal recollection and experience as a child during this time.

This conflict was not his only focus of interest however. Other subjects close to his heart were the civil population during the First World War, social history from the 18th to the 20th century, the industrial revolution in his hometown of Verviers, cultural heritage, the history of the ?East Cantons? and the ?Ten Municipalities?, German immigration in his home region (mainly 19th century), etc.

A committed man

Jacques was not only a passionate but also a very committed man. He was a man of confidence and of action, just like his father, and did not hesitate to take up responsibility which he assumed to the end.

The list of associations that called upon him as secretary, president or administrator is long? very long indeed. He acted as president of the Verviers Society for Archaeology and History, the Church Council of the listed church of Saint-Remacle, a landmark of the ?golden age of the clothiers city? (19th century). He was also secretary of the Administrative Commission for the Museums of Verviers, a member of the Scientific Committee of the tourism office for wool and fashion, and correspondent and later associated researcher of CegeSoma, and president of the non-profit support organisation of CegeSoma ?*Les Amis du CegeSoma*? until early 2018.

His no-nonsense approach and thorough knowledge of the inner workings of associations of all sorts were highly precious to our institution

A key figure of *CREHSGM* , a source for inspiration and a friend of CegeSoma

The path of Jacques crossed the *CREHSGM** ? the predecessor of CegeSoma ? at the early moments of the institution, in the years 1967-1968. As a close friend to José Gotovitch, he became correspondent for the Centre in 1969 and as such helped to bring numerous archives, journals and testimonies, which he gathered over the course of the years in the Verviers region, to our Centre.

Throughout these years, he also gave us the opportunity to get to know his warm, sympathetic and optimistic character. He always had a positive word for everybody, an open ear and constructive input for projects of all sorts.

After being a member of ?*Les Amis du CegeSoma*?, he became its administrator in 2004 and its president in 2007. He was obviously highly appreciated in this office.

Unfortunately, the time of his departure came, which has left colleagues and friends saddened and distraught.

Thank you, Jacques, for all these years of commitment and passion. Thank you also for your involvement in CegeSoma and its support organisation.

Alain Colignon & Isabelle Ponteville

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**Centre de Recherches et d'Etudes historiques de la Seconde Guerre mondiale*