

Obituary

Serge Choumoff (1921-2012)

Serge Choumoff passed away on 3rd June 2012, aged 91.

Serge Choumoff was a renowned expert in the field of leak detection and vacuum metrology. The JHP gauge (Jauge Haute Pression, or Choumoff gauge), described in the early 70's with Iapteff as co-author, proved to be one of the most reliable high-pressure ionization gauge, although not commercially available. During his career as engineer, he worked for several companies (Compagnie française Thomson-Houston, Société générale du vide (Sogev), Thomson-Brandt and Hotchkiss-Brandt Sogeme (HBS)). In particular, he had been a major player in the design and implementation of European space simulators.

Serge Choumoff was a Fellow of the French Vacuum Society (SFV), in which he was strongly involved, serving as President in 1964-1965. He organised or co-organised a number of meetings, including the 1st International Congress on the Vacuum Techniques in Space Research (Paris, 1964) and was very active in the short courses programme developed by the SFV. He represented the SFV within the International Union for Vacuum Science, Technology and Applications (IUVSTA), as a Councillor or Alternate Councillor for France (1968-80 and 1983-92) and served as Treasurer during the 1977-1980 triennium. He remained highly interested in IUVSTA matters until his death, closely following the preparation of IVC-19 (Paris, 2013). Serge Choumoff was also a Fellow of the American Vacuum Society.

Serge Choumoff was not only a top scientist but also a man strongly committed to fighting against nazism. Arrested in 1942 for having supplied components for radio transmitters to the French Resistance, he was deported to Gusen and Mauthausen. From 1997, he published several historical studies related to concentration camps.

Serge Choumoff held numerous French and foreign prestigious military and civilian decorations. It had been a great honour to know him and we will remember him with admiration and respect.