

Don Glaser died this morning in his sleep at his home in Berkeley. Don was a physicist who invented the bubble chamber for visualizing and studying the properties of elementary particles. He received the Nobel Prize for this work in 1960 at the age of 34. He later worked in microbial genetics and in molecular biology, inventing a number of new methods for automating large scale hunts for valuable mutants. He cofounded the very first biotech company – Cetus -- which later, after discovering interferon and PCR, merged with Chiron. Don was the recipient of many awards and honors in his long and active career. Besides the Nobel Prize, he received many other awards.

During the last three decades Don became interested in the visual system. I met Don in Cambridge when he was spending a couple of months in Edwin Land's Rowland Institute in the '80s. In 1991 we organized together a workshop in Berlin titled "Exploring Brain Functions: Models in Neuroscience". We have been in close touch since then. I loved the discussions with him and the observations he always made -- simple and crisp and deep. Don was a great and close friend. He retained the happy curiosity of a kid for all his life. He had a gentle mind always coming up with refreshingly counterintuitive observations. We will all miss him greatly. Science as a whole has lost one of its great personalities. Don's many friends have lost a wonderful human being whom they will never forget.