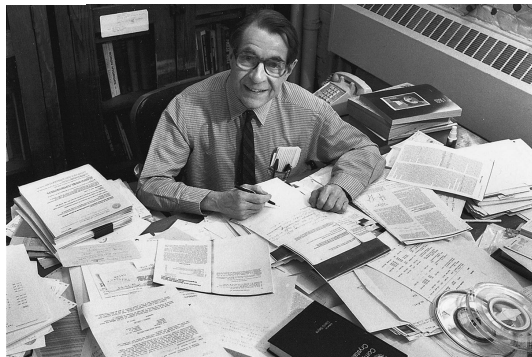


## Christer E. Nordman (1925–2022)

### The Nordman family



Christer E. Nordman, Professor Emeritus of Chemistry at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA, died peacefully at home on 6 July 2022 at the age of 97.

Christer was born on 23 January 1925 in Helsinki, Finland, to Eric and Gertrud Nordman, the eldest of five children.

He attended Gymnasiet Lärkan secondary school and spent summers in the countryside,

fishing, exploring, and searching for unusual plants and butterflies. He enjoyed collecting stamps and matchbox covers, chess, building model airplanes, and conducting chemical experiments.

As a teenager during wartime, he helped watch for Russian planes overnight from an observation tower and worked at an ammunition factory. At 16, he joined the junior branch of the Finnish volunteer guard. For several months, he rode rural nighttime patrols by bicycle, until stricter age limits were enacted and he returned home.

In 1943, he was drafted into the Finnish Army and sent to the Artillery Training Center in Riihimäki, joining the 17th Heavy Artillery ‘Tiger’ Battalion, 2nd Division, as a radio operator. He was deployed to the front line on the Karelian Isthmus, where he served until the war’s end.

Christer earned a chemical engineering degree from Helsinki University of Technology in 1949, then received a scholarship to attend graduate school at the University of Minnesota, where he studied crystallography under future Nobel laureate William Lipscomb. During this time, he co-authored several publications, including his thesis, *The crystal and molecular structure of tetraborane*.

After completing his PhD in 1953, he and his new wife, Barbara, moved to Philadelphia, where he was a postdoctoral research associate at the Institute for Cancer Research. In 1955, he joined the chemistry faculty at the University of Michigan, becoming a full professor of chemistry in 1964.

In 1971, he received a National Institutes of Health fellowship for sabbatical study at the University of Oxford, UK, with Nobel laureate Dorothy Hodgkin, and at Uppsala University in Sweden.

Christer’s research focused on X-ray crystallography and computational methods for solving the structure of macromolecules, including viruses, proteins and cholesterol.

He served as a Co-editor (1983–1988) and reviewer for *Acta Crystallographica Sections A, B and C*; attended IUCr Congresses and ACA meetings; and was a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Finnish Society of Science and Letters. Students knew him as an enthusiastic crystallography and physical chemistry teacher.

In 1995, Christer retired as professor emeritus, and in 1997 he was honored with the Patterson Award of the ACA for lifetime achievement in his field. Post-retirement, Christer still could often be found in his office on campus working on research. He enjoyed summers in the Finnish countryside, fall apple-picking in orchards near Ann Arbor, and winter cruises with Outi, whom he married in 1994.

Christer is survived by his wife, Outi Marttila-Nordman, and her children Antti Laukkanen (Susanna Melkas), Mari Laukkanen (Kai Schleutker) and Hannu Laukkanen; his sisters Carin Nordman and Bodil Soderberg (Milton); his former wife, Barbara

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Nordman, and their children Christina Nordman (Gary Dewey), Aleta Adams, Eric Nordman and Carl Nordman (Luisa); grandchildren Andrew Nordman-Kasko (Michele Sedlak), Catherine Bleta (Andy), Ian Adams, Anthony-Emil Nordman, Jacob Nordman and Aaron Nordman; and great-grandchildren Ethan, Avalon, Owen and Brysen.

Christer was predeceased by his father, Eric Johan Nordman; mother, Gertrud (Nordgren) Nordman; sisters Gunilla Nordman and Inger Genberg; and granddaughter Anika Nordman.

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