



## Dr. Elisabeth Mandon

It was another time, 30 years ago Bonn was the capital of West Germany, the “Deutsche Mark” was the currency and the talks of the summer were mostly about the Berlin wall. I stepped in a totally new world and without a doubt, to have experiences that changed me drastically.

The scientific connections and the long-lasting friendships that I made during my two years in Germany have transformed my career and my personal life in uncountable powerful ways. I consider my decision to pursue my post-doctoral studies at the University of Bonn, a positive turning point in my adult life.

I felt happy and mesmerized by immersing myself in a whole different way of living. At the center of those collections of wonders was the University of Bonn, with the complexity of a powerful and dynamic scientific institution and at the same time, with an idyllic atmosphere, that only being in a little town near the Rhine could give.

I left the amplitude of the pampas, the sensation of immensity that one gets by seeing far away only the straight line of the horizon, a place where the night skies are studded with stars, after being awarded a generous Alexander von Humboldt fellowship to study in Germany.

I recalled my first impressions after arriving in Bonn. The crowded feeling of having the mountains on one side and the river at the other and the gloomy view of the cloudy skies. Although it was so unusual and in many ways, unfamiliar, the people who I met made all difference.

The University was not in the huge campus style that I was used to, instead it was decentralized and spread around the city. In spite of that, it was amazingly well-organized and with a functionality that today in my eyes has no equal.

In times when the internet was not even a dream, it has an impressive library in Poppelsdorf, staffed with all the possible journals that one could need or image to need but more importantly, it had a team of caring librarians that were always eager to help.

I remember vividly the general euphoria and the impressive seminars when Professor Wolfgang Paul received the Nobel Prize.

I did my studies at the Kekule-Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry under the direction of Professor Konrad Sandhoff, an undisputed international leader in glycobiology and lipid metabolism. I have admired his scientific work since my early years as student in Argentina. The possibilities of work in his laboratory and enjoy numberless opportunities of one on one scientific discussion not only during my time in Bonn but still during all these years has been priceless.

But as I mentioned, the people made all the difference. Maybe when I just arrived, I felt lonely for a little while. That changed practically immediately. I found so many social activities at the university campus from free musical concerts to bicycle rides along the Rhine that it was hard to choose what to do with the free time. I met many students that are now colleagues in other institutions. I still keep up regular contacts with most of them and some are today my scientific collaborators. All of what I

mentioned, it was and is very nice, but the nicest of all, it was the feeling that I was welcomed to step and taste the marvelous GERMAN university world.