

## **M. Claude Fourmaintraux**



**Desvres faïence specialist François Piton** has notified the QCI that sadly, M. Claude Fourmaintraux, former manager of the famous La Poterie faïence factory in Desvres, died this August at age 98. Claude descended from a rich tradition of ceramists originally from Lille, including Antoine-Joseph Fourmaintraux (1728-1792), his son François-Joseph Fourmaintraux (1764-1841) who moved to Desvres and established the family there, Louis-François Fourmaintraux (1802-1885), Emile Fourmaintraux (1857-1929) who founded the La Poterie factory, and Gabriel Fourmaintraux (1886-1984), Claude's father. Claude studied as a young man in Desvres, Boulogne-sur-Mer and Malicorne, and in 1941 after WWII, he joined his father to help resurrect a factory that had been badly damaged during the German occupation. In 1946 Claude became the Technical Director under his father Gabriel and along with his brother-in-law Daniel Dutertre, the factory gained prosperity and acclaim. Claude's brilliant father Gabriel was well known for his porcelain creations, especially miniatures, as well as crackleware.

In 1982, after 42 years at the factory, Claude retired. His father Gabriel also retired that year at age 96, and died two years later, at age 98.

Claude, in retirement, was a regular attendee of the Musée de la Céramique meetings and shared his knowledge of ceramics with scholars and interested parties.



***Claude Fourmaintraux at home giving Quimper Club members a tour of his collection in 2001.***

**In 2001**, after the QCI Annual Meeting in Quimper, France, François Piton arranged an itinerary for interested members to travel north to learn more about Desvres faïence. There were few references for collectors until François published his book *C'est du Desvres* in 2001. One of the highlights of the trip was a visit to the beautiful home of Claude Fourmaintraux to meet him, his family, and to view his private collection of Desvres faïence. Claude patiently answered our questions

about Desvres faïence, and his collection included wonderful porcelain miniatures, early Delftware and Desvres production of Delftware styles for export, early museum-quality pieces of Desvres novelty ware, artwork and other antiques.



***M. Fourmaintraux's suspension.***

Those of us who visited the Fourmaintraux's benefitted from learning of the great breadth of Desvres faïence and porcelain, which like Quimper, had contributions by multiple generations of talented artists and technologists. Claude's generosity and graciousness is appreciated to this day. Our thoughts extend to his loving family and we salute a man who led a long life of contribution to the field of ceramics.

**Laverne Conway, QCI Member**

August 28, 2020, Chico, California

Many thanks to Francois Piton, always a friend of QCI members, and for allowing me to paraphrase from his book *C'est du Desvres* passages regarding Claude Fourmaintraux. Also referenced is information from an obituary published in *La Voix du Nord*, August 24, 2020.

Contact information for condolences:

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