

## **The World Jewellery Confederation pays tribute to Vice President Roland Naftule, 1937-2023**



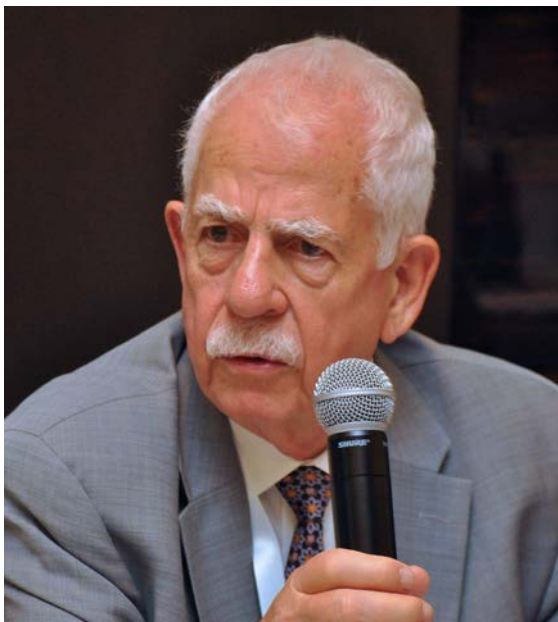
*Roland Naftule, CIBJO Vice President, who passed away on April 1, 2023, at age 85.*

MILAN, ITALY: APRIL 2, 2023 – The World Jewellery Confederation (CIBJO) honours the memory and legacy of its Vice President, Roland Naftule, who passed away peacefully at age 85 on April 1, 2023, in San Diego, California, surrounded by his loving family.

There are few if any individuals in the jewellery and gemstone world who devoted themselves more selflessly to the benefit and service of the industry as did Roland. For more than two decades, as President of CIBJO's Sector A, he oversaw the preparation, updating and maintenance of the association's Blue Book series – the world's most widely followed set of standards and terminology, which provide a common language and frames of reference for the industry, acting

as a foundational bastion for consumer confidence. As such, his work, dedication and wisdom will continue to serve industry professionals and their clients for many decades to come.

Roland was born in Switzerland in 1937, into a family that was cutting and polishing gemstones for high-end watch makers in Geneva. His grandfather, Leon Naftule, a jeweller, established a lapidary in 1926 after becoming fascinated with coloured gemstones. He was joined by his three sons, and the family business, Naftule Fils, became a mainstay of the Swiss industry.



In 1952, the eldest of Leon's sons, Jean, expanded the business to the United States, opening NAFCO Gems in New York. He was joined by his 19-year-old son, Roland, who began his career selling gemstones, traveling around the city's boroughs and nearby towns. Ten years later, the family expanded into rough production, becoming involved in mining ventures in Tanzania, producing an array of different gems.

By 1968 Roland had grown NAFCO Gems into a nationwide operation, traveling abroad to purchase rough and loose gemstones for sale in both the American and European markets. A cutting factory was opened in Shannon, Ireland, in 1969, and in 1976 he transferred the company headquarters to Scottsdale, Arizona, opening an additional lapidary in Phoenix.

*Roland Naftule was passionate about public service in the jewellery industry, dedicating years of his life to CIBJO and other industry associations, several of which he among their founders.*

With the business flourishing and his daughters joining the enterprise, Roland began nurturing another love, which quickly grew into a passion – public service. He was one of the founding organisers of the American

Gem Trade Association (AGTA), and served as its President from 1983 through 1985. He also was Chairman of AGTA's Industry Rules Committee for 12 years, and for two years served on the Board of Governors of the AGTA Gemological Testing Center.

In 1984, Roland was a founding organiser of the International Coloured Stone Association (ICA), first serving as Chairman of its organizing committee and then as its Founding President from 1985 through 1989.

In 1989 he was the founding organiser and first Chairman of the Gemstone Industry & Laboratory Conference (GILC), which is dedicated to harmonising terminology provided on reports by leading gemmological laboratories.

Roland was elected to the Board of Governors of the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) in 2001, and served the body for 12 years. He was also Chairman of the GIA's coloured gemstone advisory and museum committees.

Joining CIBJO as a U.S. representative, Roland held a variety of roles over a period of about a quarter of a century, among them Vice President, Sector A President, member of the Board of Directors, Executive Committee and President's Council, and President and Vice President of the Coloured Stone Commission.

His presence on every CIBJO body was substantial, but it was possibly as Sector A President where his mark on the gem and jewellery industry will be the most indelible. Expanding the sector's scope of activity from diamonds, coloured gemstones and pearls, to include precious corals and gemmological laboratories, he oversaw a continuously growing and working enterprise that brings together gemmologists, gem professionals, academics and industry leaders. Its work forms the basis of standards adopted across the globe, and are enshrined into various national laws and regulations, and are accepted by courts that adjudicate disputes in a variety of countries. During his term in office, two ISO standards related to jewellery were adopted by the International Organisation for Standardisation, largely based on work done within the CIBJO Diamond Commission, under Roland's supervision and leadership.

"The term 'an industry giant' is often over-used, but in Roland's case it is an understatement," said CIBJO President Gaetano Cavalieri. "His contribution to our community is immense, beginning with coloured gemstones, his first love, but spreading to every facet and corner of what we do. He stood at my side for every year of my presidency, and what has been achieved over the entire period is to his credit as well. I mourn the loss not only of a mentor, advisor and confidant, but of a close personal friend, who was more of a brother."



*Forever Young. Roland Naftule on the dance floor with his wife Fabienne, during the CIBJO Congress in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, in May 2015.*

"But it's difficult to relate to Roland in sadness," the CIBJO President continued. "For not only was he the personification of industry professionalism and integrity, but he also represented the joy for life and beauty that is inherent in our community. For many of us, the most long-lasting memories will not be the many hours we spent in discussion and deliberation, but rather from the end of the day, when we relaxed and the band started playing. Then, Roland was first on the dance floor, and definitely the most talented of us all. Year in year out, he was 'forever young.'"

Roland is survived by his wife Fabienne, his daughters Myriam and Stephanie, and their families. CIBJO shares in their loss and hopes that his memory will forever be a blessing.

**The World Jewellery Confederation (CIBJO)** is the international jewellery confederation of national trade organisations. CIBJO's purpose is to encourage harmonisation, promote international cooperation in the jewellery industry and to consider issues which concern the trade worldwide. CIBJO's chief mission is to protect consumer confidence in the industry. The World Jewellery Confederation is the sole jewellery industry organisation to have Special Consultative Status with the United Nation's Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC) and is a member of the UN Global Compact.