

World Jewellery Confederation honours the life and contribution of industry pioneer Harry Levy



Harry Levy, a soft-spoken gentleman and gemmological giant, who sheperded through the first ISO standard for diamonds.

MILAN, ITALY: MAY 17, 2023 – The World Jewellery Confederation pays tribute to Harry Levy, who passed away in London on May 15, 2023, at age 83. During his long and important career he held a variety of roles in CIBJO, as well as in other industry bodies, both in the United Kingdom and internationally.

The quintessential Englishman, Harry actually was born Hanukkah Levy in Turkey, into a Persian-Jewish family. He arrived in Britain as a young boy. He remained proud of his origins, and at the 2009 CIBJO Congress in Istanbul was visibly touched when honoured for his contribution to the industry by the Turkish Jewellery Exporters Association.

Harry studied mathematics and philosophy at university, and after graduating stayed on as a part-time lecturer. But by then he already found himself drawn to the world of gemstones, where his family was involved, and eventually chose to leave academia, setting up his own company, Levy Gems.

For most of his life Harry was a working gemstone dealer, owning and managing one of the most respected companies in London's Hatton Garden district. But he remained a scholar throughout, becoming an internationally respected authority on gemmology, and at the same time investing a major portion of his time in the public life of the industry. At CIBJO, he served alternately as President and Vice President of the Coloured Stone Commission. He also served on the Gemmological Commission, and for 10 years was president of the Diamond Commission, following which he continued on as the commission's Vice President until the time of his death.

CIBJO is not the only industry organisation to benefit from Harry's commitment to public service. He also was President of the International Diamond Council, the supreme gemmological authority of the World Federation of Diamond Bourses (WFDB) and the International Diamond Manufacturers Association (IDMA). At home he served two terms as President of the London Diamond Bourse, the leading diamond trade organisation in the United Kingdom. He also was President of Gem-A, the Gemmological Association of Great Britain, and President of the British Jewellers Association.

One of the crowning achievements of his many years of service came in July 2015, when the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) published International Standard 18323, entitled "Jewellery — Consumer confidence in the diamond industry," specifying a set of permitted descriptors for the diamond industry that are meant to be unequivocally understood by consumers. It was the first ISO standard related to diamonds, and Harry served as Chairman of the Working Group that oversaw its formulation.

Harry used his vast wealth of knowledge and industry experience to push through the new ISO International Standard. The final version mirrored the definitions outlined in CIBJO's Diamond Blue Book, which were aligned with those of the International Diamond Council (IDC).

"Harry embodied the very best of CIBJO," said Gaetano Cavalieri, President of the World Jewellery Confederation. "He was a true gentleman, soft-spoken, gentle, polite and with a iron-clad moral compass. He also was completely dedicated to the mission of creating harmonised standards for our industry, combining the intellectual excellence of a true academic and the realism of an individual who earned his living as a gem trader."

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.