Belgian Nobel laureate Englert lauds late colleague Brout

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Belgian scientist Francois Englert said his happiness Tuesday at winning the Nobel Prize for Physics was tempered with regret that life-long colleague Robert Brout could not enjoy the plaudits too.

"Of course I am happy to have won the prize, that goes without saying, but there is regret too that my colleague and friend, Robert Brout, is not there to share it," Englert told a press conference at the Free University of Brussels (ULB).

Robert Brout died in 2011, having begun the search for the elusive Higgs Boson—the "God particle"—with Englert in the 1960s at the ULB.

"It was a very long collaboration, it was a friendship. I was with Robert until his death," Englert said.

Now 80 but still working, the bespectacled and bearded professor responded in good humour to questions, joking about the delay in the announcement.

With no news for an hour, Englert said he had thought it was not to be but "we decided just the same to have a party... with banana-toasts which my grandchildren thought was a well-deserved prize for my cooking (instead)!

The Royal Swedish Academy awarded the Nobel jointly to Englert and British scientist Peter Higgs for their work on the boson and its role in giving mass to matter as the Universe cooled after the Big Bang.

The Nobel jury said the prize recognised "the theoretical discovery of a mechanism that contributes to our understanding of the origin of mass of subatomic particles, and which recently was confirmed through the discovery of the predicted fundamental particle."