

Obituary for Prof. Dr. med. Dr. h.c. Werner Creutzfeldt, FRCP

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Burkhard Göke

Department of Internal Medicine, University of Munich, Munich, Germany

It is with great sadness but also with great appreciation and gratitude to Werner Creutzfeldt that we announce the passing of this splendid scientist, great physician, thoughtful mentor, respected colleague, and true friend of many of us in the gastrointestinal community. Werner served as Editor-in-Chief of *Digestion* from 1979 to 1992 and significantly raised the profile and quality of the journal.

Werner Creutzfeldt was born 1924 in Kiel, received his medical education at the medical schools of the universities of Freiburg, Kiel and Tübingen. In 1950, he finished his MD thesis at the Institute of Anatomy in Kiel. His first paper published in 1953 was on 'The importance of our argyrophil and other pancreatic findings in diabetes mellitus and insulinoma' [1], a project already reflecting his strong interest in the field of gastrointestinal endocrinology. His last paper documented in PubMed appeared in *Digestion* in 2005 [2], at the end of a publicatory agenda over more than 50 years!

In 1957, he became a certified academic teacher when receiving his *venia legendi* in Freiburg. In 1959, he visited Boston and St. Louis as scientific fellow. At this time he was working with the famous internist Ludwig Heilmeyer in Freiburg and was recruited to Göttingen, becoming ordinarius for internal medicine and serving as full professor at the Georg-August University from 1964 to 1992. He stayed in Göttingen despite prestigious calls to other outstanding positions elsewhere, wishing to cre-



ate a highly productive and successful scientific playground nurturing and encouraging his protégés. Many of his scholars have gone on to enjoy highly successful careers, an impressive number remaining in academic gastroenterology and endocrinology or starting out as heads of big departments of renowned hospitals.

Werner published more than 500 papers and touched profoundly many topics such as neurosecretion of the pituitary, gastrointestinal endocrinology, neuroendocrine tumors, regulation of constitutive vs. regulated exocytosis, diabetes mellitus, the entero-insular axis/incretin

effect, hepatic insulin resistance, metabolic liver diseases such as ASH/NASH, exocrine pancreas (growth, inflammation, neoplasia), small intestinal function and pathophysiology, and acid-related diseases of the upper GI tract. In his later publications, he also took a stand on ethics in medicine [3, 4], deeply concerned about recent developments in society. At the occasion of his 80th birthday a whole issue of *Regulatory Peptides* [5] was dedicated

to him, acknowledging his outstanding achievements in the field of incretin research [6] which presently blossoms providing new treatment strategies for diabetes mellitus [7].

A large part of Werner Creutzfeldt remains in all of us who had the privilege to work with him and who were fortunate enough to be part of his life, and we are all the better for it.

References

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