

## **Em. Prof. Dr. Rolf Ackermann, a worldwide respected urologist and scientist**

On 11th February 2015 Professor Rolf Ackermann passed away very suddenly and unexpectedly due to a cerebral hemorrhage. He was an esteemed colleague and a good friend of many urologists worldwide and he still had taken active part in urological science. Discussions with him were always very interesting and helpful. We all miss him.

He was born in Ulm in 1941, where he also went to school. He studied medicine at the University of Würzburg and Vienna, and graduated in 1968 at University of Würzburg, Medical School. In the same year he also finished the work on his degree as doctor of medicine. He started his training as resident in Scuol, Switzerland, later on at the University of Ulm and in Gluckstadt/Elbe. In 1970 he began his urological training at the Department of Urology, University of Würzburg under the guidance of Hubert Frohmueller. In 1973 he received a NIH scholarship and did research work at the Department of Surgery, University of California, Los Angeles, USA. In 1975 he finished his residency, and in 1976 he was promoted as Oberarzt (staff member) at the Department of Urology, University of Würzburg. There he became Assistant Professor in 1977, and in 1980 he advanced to become a full Professor of Urology at the same university.



**Em. Prof. Dr. Rolf Ackermann** (Personal Foto Archive)

From 1983 to 2007 Rolf Ackerman served as Chairman of the Department of Urology, University of Düsseldorf, Medical School. He set up a modern urologic department with excellent clinical and scientific facilities. He trained many urologist, several of whom became head of departments of university and city hospitals. He also became involved in the administration of the local Heinrich-Heine University as Prorector from 1993 to 1995. From 1995 to 2003 he was appointed as Medical Director (CEO) of the University Hospital.

Düsseldorf. He was always very well respected in his different positions, and because of his outstanding skills he was able to form a modern University Department in Düsseldorf.

His main clinical and scientific interests concerned urological cancers. He worked on the development and on mechanisms of tumors of the prostate and bladder, micro analysis and DNA-modulation, as well as growth signaling pathways. A special field of his work was to look for new techniques to better classify tumors and to look for new prognostic factors. He was one of the first using microarray analysis and DNA-methylation techniques. He was always on the top of applying new techniques for tumor treatment, especially immunotherapy of kidney and prostate cancer by dendritic cells and target therapies.

Rolf Ackermann was also very active in the German Association of Urology, where he was a board member from 1985 till 1996. He held the position of the General Secretary for 6 years and in 1995/1996 he was President of this society. During this time he advanced the German Society of Urology into a modern organization, which became an example for quite a number of other medical societies in Germany.

Rolf was always internationally oriented. 1989 he was elected as a member of the very prestigious American Association of Genitourinary Surgeons. He also played an important role in the development of the EAU. In 1992 he was elected as a member of the organizing committee of the XIth EAU Congress. In the same year he was elected Chairman of the Statutes and Bylaws Committee. Here he worked with Frans Debruyne to form an innovative new organization.

In 1996 Rolf terminated his board position and became a member of the EAU-Academy, where he served as Chairman from 2010 - 2012.

In all these different and very important positions Rolf was a hard worker, always enthusiastic in reaching the goals, but he was also well known as a sharp discussant. After work Rolf was a very nice and charming person and it was always a pleasure to talk with him about fine arts, music and politics.

For his outstanding work he received a number of important awards. The EAU gave him in 2005 the Frans Debruyne Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2008 the German Society of Urology awarded him the Maximilian-Nitze-Medal. He became an Honorary Member of many societies, just to mention three of them: The German Society, the European Society and the American Association of Urology.

Rolf is survived by his wonderful wife Christel with whom he was married since 1972. Christel and Rolf were always the charming center of festive events. To Christel we express our deepest sympathy.

Manfred Wirth

Marc-Oliver Grimm

Hubert Frohmueller