

Günther Lanner:

In Memoriam Professor Lechner

No other symposium has such a long tradition as the International Neuropsychiatric Pula Congresses. Prof. Lechner organized and headed this Congress for more than 20 years as Secretary General along with Professor Barac and Primarius Radoš. Together they have turned this Congress into one of the scientific highlights in South-East Europe. It was his aim to hand on the latest scientific findings and their practical application to all medical doctors in South-East Europe.

Prof. Lechner is no longer with us. Up to his severe illness he worked medically and scientifically. Together with the Scientific Board he set up the Program for this Congress. Two days before he died, we spoke about the future of this Congress.

In the last 50 years Prof. Lechner had significant influence on medicine and neurological sciences in Austria, Europe and worldwide. He devoted his life to patients and to science. He educated thousands of students and doctors and through his help and education many of his students are now in the leading medical positions. He himself worked until his death as a physician, teacher and scientist.

He got his medical education at the Karl-Franzens-University in Graz, at the Zürich Clinic, at the University of Marseilles, and at the world famous National Hospital Queen Square in London. At the age of 32, he received his lectureship, and in 1964 he founded and headed the first EEG Department at the Graz Clinic.

Since 1972 he was the chairman of the Graz Clinic of Neurology for almost 25 years. For many years he was also the Dean of the Medical Faculty in Graz, being largely responsible for the international reputation of this Faculty. He was founding member, president and honorary president of almost all neurological, psychiatric and neurophysiological societies in Austria. He was the president of many international scientific societies and honorary member of almost all European and international neurological, psychiatric and neurophysiological societies. He was also the honorary president of this Congress. In his lifetime he received the highest national and international decorations: In 1988 he received the honorary doctorate from the Aristoteles University of Thessaloniki. Austria honored him with Great Golden Honorary decorations and he was given the Honorary Freedom (citizenship) of many

Austrian towns. He also received the honorary citizenship of Greece, as well as of the beautiful city of Pula, the venue of our Congresses.

He published around 600 scientific papers and edited many scientific books and monographs, especially on the subject of cerebral vascular diseases, focusing on early detection, diagnosis and therapy. He worked in this field for over 50 years and in the last years of his life he concentrated on primary stroke prevention. It is thanks to him that today we know more about the causes of strokes and that more is being done in stroke prevention.

How is it possible that a human being and a wonderful doctor and scientist could have achieved so much in something as short as one lifetime? Prof. Lechner was highly intelligent and remarkable intellectual with an incredible curiosity for science. He had an eye for what was important and was able to motivate his colleagues as well as his students. I was one of his first students and he accompanied me for almost 40 years. I wrote my first scientific publications with him when I was still his student.

Prof. Lechner had an amazing talent for organization, organizing countless scientific national and international congresses. Since he took over the organization of this Symposium along with Prof. Barac and with the Scientific Board 20 years ago, the Congress has improved scientifically, being now among the leading international meetings of neurology and psychiatry in South-East Europe. Prof. Lechner has left us forever. But his extraordinary medical achievements and his beneficial work, as well as his scientific energy will continue to live in us and in our students.

His widow, Mrs. Prof. Lechner, was coming to Pula every year, not only because she loves this region - she has devoted her whole life to her husband and to his professional and scientific interests. Mrs. Prof. Lechner is here today and I would like to thank her in the name of the Scientific Board and all the participants of this Congress for being able to have so much of her husband due to her support, selflessness and generosity.

We will always remember our friend, colleague and teacher, Prof. Lechner and thank him for his life and his beneficial work. I am asking you now to stand up, please, and to observe a moment of silence in the memory of Prof. Lechner. - Fiducit.