Professor Dr Günther Stein (Jena), 65th birthday

Dr Günther Stein has always fascinated his friends by his youthful and dynamic style (incredibly 65 years young!), by his positive thinking and by his keen intellectual curiosity. All this is the more remarkable since he was unwelcome as a non-conformist in the difficult days before 1989 when East Germany suffered from an incompetent and inefficient, and in some respects even criminal, political regime. He did not compromise on his opinions and was thus forced to work under very difficult conditions. As a consequence he was cut off from exchange of opinion and communication with colleagues in the West; he was not given permission to travel to Western countries despite numerous official invitations. He was not able to attend the annual congress of our association when it was held in West Berlin in October 1987. His love of travelling and new experiences made him accept a 2-year stay as a ‘medical ambassador’ in Tanzania working at the Chake-Chake Hospital in Pemba.

In the early period after the collapse of the communist regime, he did not shy away from the difficult and challenging task of reorganizing the clinics and the medical faculty of his Alma Mater in Jena. He was widely respected for his integrity and fairness in this task. During this period, he was able to establish a centre for renal transplantation in Jena. Günther Stein transformed his clinic into one of the leading German centres in clinical nephrology, dialysis, transplantation and hypertension.

Through his inquisitiveness and intellectual curiosity, he was interested in and he widely investigated many areas, particularly calcium, phosphate, and vitamin D metabolism, trace elements in renal disease, renal interstitial fibrosis, to name but a few. He organized the prestigious annual Collequium Nephrologicum Jenense and was Congress President of the 26th Congress of the Gesellschaft für Nephrologie in Jena in 1995, as well as the 2nd Joint Meeting of the Israel Society of Nephrology and Hypertension and the Gesellschaft für Nephrologie in Weimar in 1992.

His many accomplishments were rewarded with the ‘Bundesverdienstkreuz’ (Cross of the Federal Republic for distinguished merits). He also received honours by being made a member of the Deutsche Akademie der Naturforschers Leopoldina, fellow of the Royal College...
of Physicians in Edinburgh, member of Gesellschaft für Fortschritte in der Inneren Medizin and Gesellschaft Deutscher Naturforscher und Ärzte e V. He is past president of the Gesellschaft für Nephrologie and council member and past vice president of the Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Klinische Nephrologie. Professor Günther Stein, a native of Prussia, is not only a hard worker with high standards of patient care, teaching postgraduate education and research; he is also widely respected and liked as a reliable and faithful friend, as well as being a devoted family man. His many friends in nephrology wish him: ‘ad multos annos’.

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