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INVESTIGATIVE OPHTHALMOLOGY

Hermann M. Burian

On the presentation of the Proctor Medal Award in Ophthalmology to Dr. Hermann Burian

When I was asked to present the Proctor Lecturer to you, I accepted this honor with great enthusiasm. It affords me an opportunity to pay tribute to my teacher, whose stimulating example as a physician and scientist greatly influenced my decision to choose academic medicine as a career—a step which I have never had reason to regret.

Hermann Burian was born into a stimulating environment; he literally grew up in physiological institutes in Italy, Germany, and Yugoslavia that were headed by his father, a distinguished professor of physiology. As a boy, his toys were frogs and rabbits, his games were to study their reflexes, and his playgrounds were the laboratory benches of his father's institutes.

He received his medical education in Belgrade and studied ophthalmology in Berne under such illustrious masters as Siegrist and Goldmann. As did many other outstanding contributors to medicine, he had the good fortune to receive sound training in physiology under von Tschermak in Prague. From there Dr. Burian was called by Bielschowsky to join the staff of the Dartmouth Eye Institute.

At Dartmouth he became associated with a unique constellation of outstanding workers in visual physiology. Lancaster, Ames, Ogle, Boeder, Linksz, and Herzau were some of the people Burian then worked with. The most profound influence on his career, however, came undoubtedly from his former teacher, Tschermak, and from Bielschowsky, whose favorite pupil Dr. Burian soon became and whom he succeeded after Bielschowsky's death.

From Dartmouth he went to Boston and from there to Iowa, where he became a Professor of Ophthalmology in 1955.

Dr. Burian's contributions to the fields of strabismus, visual physiology, electrophysiology, and many other phases of ophthalmology are too numerous to mention here. In more than 150 publications, he has carried on and enhanced what Bielschowsky began, and thus has greatly advanced the study of neurosensory anomalies of the eyes in this country. His national and international standing in the scientific community is reflected by numerous honors, awards, and lectureships here and abroad, by his past and present editorial positions, and by his honorary memberships in many scientific organizations.

This introduction could not be complete without mentioning that Dr. Burian is one of the most broadly educated and cultured persons I have encountered. Having been brought up in the traditional humanistic European educational system, with its early emphasis on Latin and Greek, his interests are deeply rooted in the classics and range widely from archeology to history and literature. However, far from being an introverted "egghead," he is equally enthusiastic about the lighter aspects of life. He is extraordinarily knowledgeable about music and the arts, is a charming and at times delightfully uninhibited social companion, who converses fluently in five languages. His booming

laughter can be heard from afar when the wine flows and good friends are there to share it with him.

It gives me great pleasure, and I consider it a privilege indeed, to introduce my scientific father and the 1969 Proctor Lecturer, Hermann Burian.

Gunter K. von Noorden

Remarks on Acceptance of the Proctor Medal Award

Hermann M. Burian

The coveted Proctor Medal can be awarded to only a few recipients. It is all the more gratifying to have one's colleagues consider one worthy of being so honored. I am deeply grateful to the Trustees of the Association for Research in Ophthalmology for having selected me for this signal distincition, and I am happy to have this opportunity to acknowledge my gratitude publicly.

When I was told over one year ago that I would be giving the Proctor Lecture in 1969, I was not fully aware that the meetings of the Association would be split into meetings oriented toward the basic sciences and meetings oriented toward the clinical sciences. When I told Dr. Maumenee that my lecture would be concerned with the temporal aspects of the human ERG, he appeared distinctly disappointed. But in his usual generous fashion he immediately agreed and has organized this meeting around the application of electrophysiologic methods to clinical problems. I am grateful to him for having done so. And I am sure that the summaries of our knowledge which were presented in such exemplary fashion preceding my lecture will be of great help to those ophthalmologists who wish to learn how the assessment of visual functions by electrophysiologic methods can be useful to them in answering diagnostic, prognostic, and other clinical questions.

I have alluded to the split in the meetings of the Association into meetings concerned with basic sciences and meetings concerned with clinical sciences. I, for one, regret this development, as well as some other developments within the Association. But this happy occasion is not the time for regrets or criticisms. Rather, let me for just a moment look back to 1938, the year in which I attended my first meeting of this Association and made one of my first public appearances. Only a few papers were presented—eight in all, if I remember rightly. However, this had the advantage of allowing for a thorough and searching discussion of each paper by the audience which, though small in number, was enthusiastic and deeply interested.

Around this time an editorial appeared in one of our ophthalmic journals which pointed to the fact that almost everyone who presented a paper at the Association meeting had a foreign accent in speaking English, and it was stated, though maybe not quite in these words, that no red-blooded American ophthalmologist would consent to work in a laboratory for a pittance as these newcomers did. I confess that I rather resented this editorial at the time and regretted the implication that