

INVESTIGATIVE OPHTHALMOLOGY

On the presentation of the Friedenwald Award
of the Association for Research in Ophthalmology

to

Ernst Bárány

Ann Arbor, Mich., Dec. 3, 1962

Professor Ernst Bárány has been selected by the Trustees of the Association for Research in Ophthalmology as the recipient of the Jonas S. Friedenwald Award. He is the sixth scientist and the first European to be so honored. Tonight it is my pleasure to tell you a little about Dr. Bárány's background and some of his accomplishments.

Ernst Bárány was born in Vienna, Aug. 8, 1910. In 1917 his family moved to Sweden when his father, an otologist and a Nobel Laureate in Medicine and Physiology, was asked to set up a Department of Otolaryngology at Uppsala University. His early education was in schools there. He graduated from high school in 1927, studied physics and mathematics at Uppsala University for one year, and then transferred to the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, where he studied electrical engineering for two years. At this time, Ernst's father, who early recognized that a sound foundation in the basic sciences would be useful in a medical research career, urged him to enter medical school.

During medical school Ernst Bárány was interested in the physiology of hearing and his laboratory was in the Department of Otolaryngology at the Academic Hospital. His doctor's thesis on the physiology of bone conduction was written while he was still a medical student, a practice which

Bárány modestly claims is not uncommon in Sweden. After finishing his thesis he worked for some time on the carotid sinus while at the Pharmacology Department of the Caroline Institute in Stockholm under Professor Goran Liljestränd. In 1940 he finished medical school and became "Docent" in Physiology at Uppsala University.

Dr Bárány applied for a full-time clinical appointment in the Eye Department of the Academic Hospital in 1942. To compete for this position it was necessary to do some ophthalmologic research. He performed some experiments on the Stiles-Crawford effect in polarized light which almost completely denuded one of his own corneas. While confined to bed with both eyes bandaged, the idea came to him that the superior visual acuity in binocular vision could be due to statistical summation of the fluctuating acuities of both eyes. Rapidly he conducted a series of experiments to prove his theory and he won the appointment in the Eye Department. After three years in full-time clinical work he returned to physiology, continuing with eye research, but also studying such things as the pharmacology of anticonvulsant drugs. Six weeks of each vacation up to 1949 he spent as sole ophthalmologist in a large county hospital.

Late in 1946 Dr. Barany wrote to me outlining in detail a novel method for determining the rate of flow of aqueous humor. With backing from the Swedish Medical Research Council, Dr. Barany came to the Howe Laboratory in Boston for six months where I had the opportunity to work with one of the most talented and knowledgeable scientists I have ever known. He and I developed what became known as the PAH-method for aqueous flow. While in Boston he applied for the Chair of Pharmacology at Uppsala University and, Barany tells me, to the surprise of all "real" pharmacologists, he got it. He has been Head of the Pharmacology Department since 1949, teaching pharmacology to medical students and directing a variety of physiologic and pharmacologic research projects, a considerable number of which have had to do with glaucoma.

Dr. Barany has become well known to many ophthalmologists on this side of the Atlantic through his frequent visits to America. He was invited to the Glaucoma Symposium which, incidentally, Jonas Friedenwald also attended, at St. Marguerite, Quebec, at the time of the International Congress of Ophthalmology in 1954. He was the first foreign investigator to be invited to the Macy Conference on

glaucoma held at Princeton, New Jersey. Barany was a smash hit! When names were being suggested for participants for later conferences, Barany's headed the list.

Ernst Barany was married in 1938 to a classmate from medical school, Margit Boman. They have three children, Sven Robert born in 1939, John Anders born in 1942, and Eva Maria born in 1945.

Not the least of Ernst Barany's attributes is his versatility and sense of humor. Few may know that every Sunday night for three years Barany, with three other recondite gentlemen, participated in the most popular television show in Sweden. I hear it was sort of a smorgasbord version of "Information Please" where the questions pertained to all branches of science. One biologic question which might have daunted lesser groups was: "Why are the buttons placed on the right-hand side of men's clothes whereas they are on the left-hand side of women's clothes?" Answer: "So you can tell men and women apart in the dark."

You can see that this requires knowledge and talent beyond the ordinary.

Now it is my great pleasure to present the Jonas S. Friedenwald Award to Professor Ernst Barany who so richly deserves it.

V. Everett Kinsey