Laudatio

Retirement of Claude Jacobs

Claude Jacobs, MD, Professor of Nephrology at the Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital in Paris, retired from the position of chief of the Division of Nephrology in September 1998. This obviously does not mean that he retired from active professional life since all his friends know that he remains as active as ever.

Claude Jacobs was born in Strasbourg in 1932. He did his medical studies at Paris Medical School and succeeded to be selected for internship at Paris hospitals in 1957. He subsequently became assistant of Professor Maurice Dérot at the Division of Metabolic and Diabetic Diseases at Hôtel Dieu hospital, Paris from 1964 to 1966. He met there Professor Marcel Legrain, moved with him first to the Nephrology Division of Foch hospital, Suresnes (Paris suburb) in 1966 and thereafter to the Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital, Paris in 1972 where they created a Division of Nephrology. After having been appointed to chief of the Nephrology Division at the Pasteur-Valley-Radot Centre of the Association pour l’Utilisation du rein Artificiel (AURA) in Paris from 1980 to 1986, he succeeded Professor Legrain as head of the Division of Nephrology at the Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital, Paris in 1986.

Claude Jacob’s interest for renal diseases, and in particular for the treatment of renal failure by various renal replacement therapy modalities, arose early in his professional life through the contact with Maurice Dérot and his close collaboration with Marcel Legrain. At the Hôtel Dieu where Marcel Legrain had built up the first facilities in Paris to perform his pioneering work in the treatment of acute renal failure by peritoneal dialysis, and subsequently at Foch hospital Claude eagerly added his energy and talent to the development of various dialysis methods and their application not only to acute, but also to chronic renal failure. It is their common merit to have introduced the technique of continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis (CAPD) in France and to have succeeded in applying this renal replacement method to numerous patients with end-stage renal failure despite an initially skeptical, and sometimes hostile, welcome of this new method by other French nephrologists.

Besides his time-consuming clinical activities, Claude Jacobs made important contributions to the French and international nephrology community, by organizing a yearly nephrology meeting at the Pitié hospital, by participating at numerous national and supranational steering committees devoted to the area of chronic renal failure patients and to research into uraemia and dialysis, including his build-up of a regional and subsequently national dialysis patient registry (‘Diaphane’) and his post as the French keyman of the EDTA Registry. He was the president of two international meetings of nephrology societies held in Paris, namely the 29th ERA-EDTA congress in June 1992 and the 14th congress of the International Society of Blood Purification (ISBP) in September 1996.

His broad knowledge in the field of Nephrology and his ease at directing or participating actively at scientific discussions, and in addition his excellent mastering of three major languages, namely French, English and German have made him an attractive, frequently invited actor at national and international meetings. He is a highly esteemed reviewer of medical journals, a member of many scientific boards, Subject Editor of Nephrology Dialysis Transplantation and International Editor of the American Journal of Kidney Diseases. He also is co-editor of the well-known Nephrology textbook Replacement of Renal Function by Dialysis.

One of his most noticeable, universally recognized qualities is his unique skill of promoting balanced views and achieving gentlemen’s agreements in seemingly inextricable situations, and his interventions are augmented by his characteristic friendly smile. This however does by no means exclude straightforward directions of his mind and achievements of firm and useful conclusions.

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Last, but not least, it is the permanent, loving presence of his wife Jeanine which made his outstanding career possible and allowed him to develop the numerous clinical, scientific and administrative activities of worldwide recognition and esteem. One of their two children has elected to follow his father’s steps and has become a physician.

Our best wishes accompany Claude Jacobs for a continued, brilliant activity within our scientific community and for numerous other activities in a rich post-academic life.

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