

IN MEMORIAM

Robert Victor Cluzan
January 23, 1930 – October 15, 2014



Robert Victor Cluzan has left us. He was 84. He was a friend, my friend.

After a board certification as medical doctor in Paris University, Robert focused firstly on the pharmacology of drugs and their dissemination in the lymphatic system before turning to pathology. In position at the Saint-Michel hospital, he was in charge of the surgical samples of all total lymphangiectomies performed by Marceau Servelle at a time where aggressive surgery was a treatment for limb lymphedemas. The poor results of this declining technique led him to think that another therapeutic approach was possible. It became the goal of any of his professional activity. He multiplied contacts with those who implemented a conservative and functional therapeutic approach of lymphedemas particularly in Germany with Michael Földi, in Australia with John Casley-Smith and in France with Jean Paul Desprez-Curely, a master in lymphatic radiology.

I first met Robert in 1974 as I was developing a radionuclide method to assess lymphedemas. He was the research director

of Dacour Boots Pharma laboratories where he was developing the venalot, a drug targeting the lymphatic system. This drug has received a full agreement in France and in Europe. It was the very beginning of the French Lymphology. A French Association for Lymphology was created in 1976, in Paris. Around Robert a multidisciplinary group gathering Jean-Paul Desprez-Curely (radiologist), Claude Jacquillat (oncologist), Pierre Banzet (plastic surgeon), Jean-Paul Giroud (pharmacologist), André Pelletier (immunologist) and I (nuclear medicine) used to meet monthly and had wide discussions in all fields of lymphology. This Association would become the French Society of Lymphology in 1992.

During these past 40 years, Robert was simultaneously a clinician and a scientist.

A *clinician* who has left Saint Michel Hospital for Cognacq-Jay Hospital to create the first French lymphology unit. This unit would become and still remains the reference for the treatment of lymphedemas in France. In this unit he has received many young lymphologists and a lot of leaders in lymphology; he was a teacher and a mentor.

A *scientist* always interested in new development in Lymphology. We were a team, he was looking after the patients and I was assessing them before, during and after the treatment with radionuclide lymphoscintigraphy. He was a distinguished member and the treasurer of the International Society of Lymphology. He left this function in 2005, and his last congress of the International Society was in 2007 in Shanghai.

Robert was always circumspect. He was not looking for notoriety. The only time he was President was for the congress we have

organized together in Paris in 1991. The gratitude of the lymphology community was sufficient for him.

If I have to summarize: Robert was a medical doctor, careful and always free for the patients.

He was a rigorous and honest scientist. He also was a simple man. He liked art, design, and reading. He was a man who knew how to listen to somebody with a glass of a beer or a pure malt whiskey, his mischievous eyes sparkling behind the wreath of smoke of his pipe.

Robert was a humanist.

Alain Pecking
Colombes, France

■ ■ ■

My trip to Genoa had a scheduled stop in Paris just to see Robert. Fortune and the strike prevented me from giving him a last hug.

I used to call him “Mon maître,” notwithstanding the deep friendship he allowed me to have by uncountable visits to his home, to his service and the so many chats where beer flowed under the heavy smoke from my cigarette and his pipe.

I hope that my sadness will quickly turn to the happy memories he planted on me.

Mauro Andrade
São Paulo, Brazil

■ ■ ■

Robert represented for us a Father in Lymphology and a constant guide for our ISL and ESL Societies.

Francesco Boccardo
Genoa, Italy

■ ■ ■

I am sorry to hear this. I was fortunate to have had several interesting discussions with him. I remember especially when I was invited to Société Française De Lymphologie in Paris in 1999.

He was truly a nestor in lymphology!

Håkan Brorson
Malmö, Sweden

■ ■ ■

I would also like to express my deepest sadness at Robert’s passing. He was indeed

a great Maestro, Lymphologist, and Friend. He will be missed by all.

Corradino Campisi
Genoa, Italy

■ ■ ■

I had already bought train tickets from Basel to Paris to visit Robert the next week. Now it is too late. We lost a good friend; a valuable scientist and a famous lymphologist.

Michael and I are very sad and send our compassion to his family.

Etelka Földi
Hinterzarten, Germany

■ ■ ■

It is really sad news. I remember Dr. Cluzan, his active participation in the 21st Congress of ISL in Shanghai in 2007 when he was not in very good health. We will miss him.

Ningfei Liu
Shanghai, China

■ ■ ■

Death takes not only body but also minds. Robert had an exceptionally sober, straight thinking, and creative mind. He could see in human biology things others would not notice. I spent with him days on wine and exchange of views and learned simplicity of thinking.

Waldemar L. Olszewski
Warsaw, Poland

■ ■ ■

It is a very bad news. As Past Président of GEL, ESL, and ISL, I express my deep sadness and my brotherhood

Alexandre Pissas
Tresques, France

■ ■ ■

How sad! Another giant in our family has passed on to join his friends in the Celestial Chapter of Lymphology (Lymphology 36:150-158, 2003).

Marlys Witte, Michael Bernas,
Grace Wagner
ISL Central Office
Tucson, Arizona USA